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# LONGINUS

# On the Sublime

Translated
with Commentary by
James A. Arieti
and
John M. Crossett

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# Preface

THE idea for this book was born in 1956, when my late friend and collaborator, John M. Crossett studied Longinus with Professor Werner Jaeger at Harvard. The idea of a commentary lay dormant in Crossett's mind until the Fall of 1969, when Crossett was granted a sabbatical semester by Grinnell College to begin collecting notes. The constraints of teaching at a small liberal arts college as well as the distraction of other projects caused him to put aside further work on the commentary. In 1973, Crossett asked me to participate in this project. Its aim was to be an edition primarily for Greekless readers but useful also to classicists. If possible, the edition should have some value as a discourse on literary criticism generally. Crossett felt that since his primary work had been in English literature and mine in Classics, a joint enterprise would be beneficial. The first fruit of this collaboration was our monograph *The Dating of Longinus* (1975).

When we had completed the monograph, Crossett turned over to me what notes he had collected during his sabbatical, and essentially passed to me the task of sifting through his notes, adding considerably to them, and writing the commentary. We were to have worked closely together on the final drafts and on the translation, but Crossett's unexpected death in 1981 prevented this renewed cooperation. The death of a friend and colleague was a painful private loss. Its effect on this book has been profound. This work is but a semblance of what it would have been had Crossett lived to share in the final writing and in the translating. His extraordinary insight and understanding would have made a much deeper mark; his vehement insistence on absolute accuracy would have been insurance against any errors which may have crept in; his felicities of style were such that they would have delighted Longinus. As it is, I cannot share with John Crossett what reprobation may attend this publication: the blame is mine. If however, these pages have any worth, he may justly claim his due meed.

This book has been my principal labor for the past eleven years. During this time, I have enjoyed fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities and from Hampden-Sydney College. The many libraries which, through the auspices of Interlibrary Loan services, have lent me books and periodicals, would require a ream of pages to thank individually. Let it be said that we who labor at small colleges owe these happy coopera-

tions a great debt.

I should like to record my gratitude to Brenda Garrett for her careful typesetting of the manuscript; to Stuart Cox for his help in the book's make-up; to Sutton Baldwin for his work on the indices; and to Richard McClintock for his design of the volume. I am grateful also to Hampden-Sydney College for undertaking the costs associated with preparing this book for the press.

Despite these years studying sublimity, I am yet unable adequately to express my gratitude to my wife Barbara for her encouragement, patience, and good cheer.

JAMES A. ARIETI

*Hampden-Sydney, Virginia*
*March, 1984*

# Introduction

AMONG the curiosities of literature is the sustained interest in rhetorical technique throughout antiquity and the middle ages. When we think of the precious authors and works lost, we often shudder in amazement at the careful preservation of the handbooks, so many of them, so sterile and repetitive, so multiplying in distinctions that vie in subtlety with Aquinas and Scotus, but distinctions on a subject matter that seems to merit the contempt which Bacon expressed for scholasticism:

> For the wit and mind of man, if it work upon matter, which is the contemplation of the creatures of God, worketh according to the stuff, and is limited thereby; but if it work upon itself, as the spider worketh his web, then it is endless, and brings forth indeed cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit.

Perhaps we shall best grasp what rhetoric and rhetorical theory meant to the ancients if we look not at the glowing words of Isocrates in praise of the *logos*, nor even at the clinical analysis of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, but at the anonymous pages of some late rhetorician, to be found in the drab pages of *Rhetores Graeci, Volumen XIV*, the *Prolegomenon Sylloge* (ed. Hugo Rabe [Leipzig: Teubner, 1931], pp. 14-15). There the author addresses himself to the question, "Why rhetoric?", and in his answer we see the poignant importance which the discipline had for men who knew from experience that, without the form of *logos* called speech, there could be no culture or civilization.

> Why rhetoric? To order and ornament the life of men and the polity. This is why the rhetorician is called "political". . .there are three species of rhetoric—legal, advisory, panegyrical, and without these the polity cannot be established.

The author then examines each kind—its operation and its aim: the legal

aims at justice; the advisory at counseling us to turn toward the good and away from vice for our own advantage; the panegyric at what is fine. At the end of each, like a refrain in a chorus, come the words: "without this, the polity cannot be established."

Such, then, is the aim of panegyric, of praise: to extol the good and to censure vice. Neither Roman emperors—with notable exceptions, like Marcus Aurelius, who went out of his way to hear the precocious rhetorician Hermogenes, and who once lectured the Roman Senate on the immortality of the soul—nor Roman culture much cared to hear its vices censured. The Latin voice of Juvenal, for all his passion and power, all his rhetorical philosophy, could not dent them; what chance had a small written speech, Platonic in its rhetoric, Aristotelian in its logic, composed by an unknown Greek, have on that culture? We may hope that in our day, which has seen one revival of its accidental preservation, we may experience another revival, in which more attention is paid to the moral as well as the aesthetic benefit to be gained from its pages.

As Samuel H. Monk has shown,[1] that first revival came when Longinus had a huge vogue in the eighteenth century; a rough parallel would be the mixed vogue and influence of Freud on the first half of the twentieth century. As with Freud, Longinian terminology, insight, and viewpoint became such a part and parcel of both the critics and their laity that in the nineteenth century he was simply subsumed.[2] His influence has continued to operate in this subsumed and subterranean way in the twentieth century. Yet if we take the three most influentially famous critics of antiquity—Aristotle, Horace, and Longinus—it is to Longinus that contemporary students make their most sympathetic and empathetic response. The reasons are not hard to find. First, Longinus combines sophistication of critical expertise with spontaneity of response. Second, he passes his critical judgments with skill and wit and he is perfectly willing to make aesthetic evaluations in clear and superior tones. He bases his aesthetic on his high sense of man's dignity, which he places squarely in the *logos* (chapter 7 especially), but he sees this human superiority as taking its origin in responses to grand natural phenomena—such as volcanoes and oceans—and their authentic artistic evocations. In short, Longinus makes literary

[1]Samuel H. Monk, *The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-Century England.* Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1960.

[2]See, for example, Allen Tate, *Longinus and the New Criticism, Essays of Four Decades.* Chicago: Swallow Press, 1968.

criticsm an art.

It is virtually certain that Longinus is writing to rebut the views of Caecilius of Calacte, a rhetorical theorist whose life spanned the first century B.C. and the first century A.D. and who was a friend and contemporary of Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Longinus attacks Caecilius with vigorous outbursts of indignation and amazement. Indeed, the excuse for writing *On the Sublime* came from a reading of Caecilius which Longinus and Terentianus conducted together (1.1); it was the defects of Caecilius' work which roused their interest in the subject, for Caecilius failed to treat it worthily by omitting the main points; furthermore, Caecilius gave thousands of examples but never discussed the means of attaining the sublime. In rebuttal, Longinus takes the very principles advanced by Caecilius, chooses a parallel set of authors, and proceeds to perform his own comparison as a means of demolishing those principles. In the process, Longinus hopes to be writing something useful for men in public life. Sublimity is to have a practical use.

## *The Structure of* On the Sublime

Longinus' treatise is cast in the form of a classical oration. Such a speech, as Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1414b ff.) observes, has four parts: the exordium, narrative (also referred to as "exposition"), proof, and peroration.[3] The exordium, Aristotle says, may be either irrelevant to the speech, as when Isocrates engages in a tirade against the sophists in his speech in praise of Helen, or intimately connected with the speech. Longinus launches immediately into his subject, referring to Caecilius' book on sublimity, which he and his pupil Terentianus found insufficient. He never digresses from his subject during the exordium, even when he discusses the side-issue of whether art or nature is responsible for sublimity. The subject matter of the exordium is praise or blame, advice, an appeal to the hearer. The speaker must persuade the hearer that the subject is important, that it concerns his own interests, that it excites wonder, and that it is pleasant. Longinus fulfills these criteria: he blames Caecilius for not setting down the manner in which we might lead our natures to greatness; he praises Caecilius,

[3]Longinus' speech to Terentianus may be outlined thus:

I Exordium: chapters 1-2
II. Narrative: chapters 3-8
III. Proof: chapters 9-43
IV. Peroration: chapter 44

however, for his seriousness and his eagerness to perceive; he advises Terentianus to engage in critical decision with him; and he appeals to Terentianus four times, calling him "my dearest Postumius Terentianus," "fellow pupil," "my dear friend," and "my most pleasing Terentianus." The topic, Longinus says, is important, for what we have in common with the gods is "good deeds and truth," and this speech will pursue truth and is in itself a "good deed"; it is certainly in Terentianus' interests, for they shall "theorize on something useful for men in political life." In studying sublimity they will learn what excites wonder, which, with its stunning power, prevails everywhere; the work will be pleasant, for it will be the mutual project of Longinus and "most pleasing Terentianus."

A good exordium, Aristotle continues, ought also to pave the way for what follows, and we find in Longinus' exordium an adumbration of the rest of the work. The exposition is prefigured in the short definition of sublimity as a kind of height and conspicuous excellence in speeches and writings; the phrase "mantle of the ages" will be echoed in ch. 7, the discussion of the test of time; the proof is adumbrated in the discussion of technique and nature, which figures again and again in chapters 9-43. And finally, the peroration with its discussion of cultural decline is, we would suggest, hinted at in the comments in 1.4 concerning persuasion and ecstasy—for, Longinus will argue in chapter 44, decline results from an internal moral degeneration, not from political causes. The exordium concludes with a statement of its value:

> If, as I declare, he who looks down on those engaged in useful learning would make for himself a peroration of these things, he would no longer consider theorizing on the subject "too much" and useless.

An exposition—we shall use the alternative term, since one cannot "narrate" about an inanimate thing like sublimity—is a setting down of the facts of a case or situation so that the audience will be familiar with them and be able both to grasp the whole situation and to relate the succeeding proofs to its various parts. It may be compared loosely with a lawyer's brief. The virtues of an exposition are agreed upon by all the rhetorical handbooks: clarity, conciseness, and persuasiveness.

Because of the lacuna which comes between chapters 2 and 3, we do not know how Longinus effected his transition from introduction to exposition. We pick up in the middle of a quotation, which Longinus is using to

help define sublimity in an Aristotelian manner: the location of the mean by defining the extremes. Thus "swelling" is overstepping the limit of what is sublime; "undergraduate wit" is a deficiency. Because these vices are closely allied to sublimity, the prospective writer must be aware of them; hence Longinus defines and illustrates them, and provides an account of what is responsible for them: the craze for novelty.

Having discussed the extremes, Longinus is now ready to define sublimity more fully than in his introductory definition (1.2); to provide a test for recognizing it; and to list its parts in accordance with the two categories of nature and technique, mentioned in the exordium (2.2). As the introduction had not been the irrelevant prelude allowed by Aristotle to the epideictic speech, but had instead adumbrated the exposition, so the exposition states more fully and clearly the casually introduced topics of the introduction. And as the exordium had adumbrated the exposition, so the exposition adumbrates the proofs and the peroration: chapter 5 refers to specific rhetorical devices to be discussed in the proof; chapter 7 discusses briefly the relationship of rhetoric to moral worth, the subject of the great peroration.

The restated definition of sublimity appears in chapter 7: the test of time. The two kinds of causes for sublimity—those coming from nature and those from nature and technique (or from technique alone)—are enumerated in chapter 8. The fivefold enumeration of the springs most productive of sublimity, with appropriate subdivisions, provides an outline for the third section of the speech.

The third part of a speech presents the "demonstration" or "proof." The terms are used almost interchangeably by the rhetorical handbooks, although some make a distinction.[4] Proofs, says Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1355b35 ff.) come in two classes: (a) those that lack technique, like witnesses, evidence resulting from torture, and affidavits; those that are the result of technique, which are produced out of ourselves, by our character, by how the audience is disposed toward us; and (b) by the speech itself, *i.e.*, does it say—or seem to say—what is true. Aristotle conjoins the words "demonstration" and "proof" as he begins his discussion of the matter (*Rhetoric*

[4]The anonymous *Art of Rhetoric* (Spengel I.445) says that "proof (πίστις)" is not always true, "demonstration (ἀπόδειξις)" is. "Proof," says the anonymous author—who is following the rhetorician Alexander—is suitable for rhetoric, "demonstration" for philosophy. The purpose of "proof" is to get those listening to "set themselves down as subscribing to" what is said; it can work either on emotion or on the situation, and, if the latter, it has three methods open to it: (1) argument from probability; (2) argument from inference; (3) argument from example. Longinus, as a literary critic, although he uses method #3 extensively, also uses the other methods in full force.

1417b21): "The proofs ought to be demonstrative." Such proofs will vary in their demonstrative power and exactness in accordance with the kind of speech: in court-cases, hard data and evidence are possible and consequently best; in epideictic speeches, however, the facts are taken on trust—*e.g.*, when we hear a Fourth of July oration, we do not inquire whether George Washington really did chop down the cherry tree. In deliberative speeches, where counsel is being offered for the future, demonstration is more difficult than in law-suits.

Longinus' "speech" lies midway between the epideictic and the deliberative, for he is praising sublimity in rhetoric and is also counseling his young friend, and his readers, to strive for sublimity. His proofs consist of examples—both good and bad examples, either of which he can use to confirm his theory. And the examples depend on his taste and judgment, which few modern critics have questioned. In those places where we do question his taste or judgment, we are generally ignorant of Greek usage, rhythm, pronunciation, and so forth, a knowledge of which might enable us to see how really perceptive Longinus is. As a critic, he is that rare thing: a beautiful combination of insight and cogency, plus style, a virtue that Aristotle's *Poetics* lacks.

The section of "proofs" is the longest of the four parts which survive in the manuscript; it extends from ch. 9 through ch. 43, about 50% of the extant text. Longinus refers to the largest single part of it—the technical section on "figures" (chs. 16-29)—as a "parenthesis" (29.2). Although he had censured Caecilius for trying to define by example (1.1), it was not possible for him, of course, to do his job without examples, for they are the "body" of his demonstration. Similarly, Dionysius of Halicarnassus omitted detailed examples in his analysis of Thucydides; and, when taken to task by his friend Ammaeus for the omission, regretfully turning to the method of "those who busy themselves with handbooks on technique and introductions to speech-writing," he abjured the "epideictic" form (*Letter to Ammaeus* 2.1).

The peroration, like the exordium, Aristotle says (*Rhetoric* 1419b), ought to dispose the hearer favorably towards the speaker and unfavorably towards the adversary; it should develop and diminish; it should excite the emotions of the hearer; and it should recapitulate. The use of a conversation, startling after continuous exposition, surely disposes the hearer favorably, and especially to Longinus' arguments, which are subtle and profound. The arguments of both the philosopher and Longinus are developed at length and, in his remarks, Longinus neatly diminishes the

philosopher's points. Topics like the decline of culture—and its causes, whether political or moral—always arouse the emotions, for such are topics on which men are likely to argue.

Since one function of a peroration is to recapitulate the proofs of the demonstration, Longinus faced a difficulty in fulfilling this function: to recapitulate the various rhetorical devices by name would be dull and uninformative. Hence he chose to "occult," to hide their clarity by using them in the course of his philosophic and emotional arguments and in the characterization which provides the substantive form of his peroration. Development (discussed in chapter 11) Longinus parodies in the analogy drawn by the philosopher between pygmies and his contemporaries; imagery (discussed in chapter 15) is used throughout chapter 44—in the image of occult elucidation, the image of a harem, and the image of swaddling clothes, an image which calls too much attention to itself—a vice he had censured in Hyperides; asyndeton (discussed in chapter 19) is striking in the transition from paragraph 11 to paragraph 12; polysyndeton (discussed in chapter 21) is used in Longinus' own speech: "*hybris* and lawlessness and impudent shamelessness"; change in number (discussed in chapter 23) occurs when the philosopher shifts from the plural "household servants" to the singular "slave." And we leave it to the reader to find the rest.[5]

## *Longinus and the Philosophers*

After adequate study and practice in dialectic, geometry, astronomy, after the pain of intellectual and discursive agony, the Platonic soul *suddenly* catches fire and, by means of that seminal flame, blasts and bursts its way into the vision of ecstasy (*Seventh Epistle* 341c; *Symposium* 210e). The Longinian sublime operates in the same way: after long arid stretches and reaches of technique in the theory of rhetoric, the artist—whether of speech or writing—*suddenly* (12.4; 35.4) bursts into a fire of loftiness and sublimity; a kind of emotion (*pathos*) that both results from action (*praxis*) and is itself

[5]He should be warned, however, that those devices which depend on rhythm, are not detectable in English translation and are, besides—since our knowledge of Greek rhythm is simply not good enough to appreciate any such rhythmic felicities—very uncertain even in the Greek. Perhaps an example of "choppy rhythm" (discussed in chapter 41) is the multiplicity of short syllables in the philosopher's phrase *ποτε κατὰ τὸν ἡμέτερον* or his word *κεκονδυλισμένον* . Pettiness of diction (chapter 43) and use of ordinary colloquial diction (chapter 30) are similarly difficult to detect since we have lost so much of ancient literature. Perhaps when the philosopher refers to the "so-called nani," he is suggesting such a word.

a kind of action (*praxis*: see Aristotle, *Poetics* 1452b11). Such an artist is primarily a soul, the mere resonance of which is sublimity (9.2).

Such a comparison necessarily leads to a syncretistic synthesis of Plato and Aristotle; we have tried, in our *Commentary*, to show how parts of Stoic philosophy and terminology are subsumed in Longinus' work. (For the Epicureans, of course, there is no place in Longinus' world of technique and transcendence.) The *Commentary* will also show, *passim*, how much Longinus is Aristotelian in his methodology and terminology: if he is a Platonist at his own moments of sublimity, he is Aristotelian in those arid stretches which prepare the way to the flashing moments. And yet, for all of the Platonic spirit and the Aristotelian methodology, Longinus cannot ultimately be classified as either, any more than he can be classified as a Stoic. The differences between him and the philosophic schools are as illuminating as the similarities.

For Plato, transcendence is metaphysical: the soul goes "beyond being."[6] The world of nature is a world of flux, impermanence, imperfection. For Longinus, the aesthetics of this world, of nature, is its own metaphysical ultimate; in Platonic terms, Longinus remains on one of the lower rungs of the ladder of love, for in Plato the end is a knowledge of beauty itself, abstracted from all earthly manifestations (*Symposium* 211C).

For Aristotle—except in Book Lambda of the *Metaphysics*—this world is an end in itself: in those few awkward pages of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1100a10-1101b9) where Aristotle discusses Solon, his views of an afterlife are tentative and doubtful; and these are all that survive to us of whatever views Aristotle may have had on the matter. In the *Hymn to Hermeias*, Aristotle's view is not materially different from that of Cicero in *The Dream of Scipio*. Thus far Aristotle and Longinus concur. But when Aristotle discusses art—once again, in the extant works—his view never rises above the clinical. Neither in the *Poetics* nor in the *Rhetoric* do we ever find mention of sublimity as a transcendent experience; and even the famous theory of catharsis is described and analyzed as an experience of the soul in the sense of that word which Aristotle uses exclusively in the *On the Soul*. And the *On the Soul (De Anima)* deals with the soul as it is in this world. Longinus, with his emphasis on the "sudden" and blinding ecstasy of the sublime psychically far transcends Aristotle's artistic theory, at the same time that Longinus falls short of Plato's metaphysical transcendence.

[6]Paul Friedlander, *Plato: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969) Vol. 1, p. 75.

Although Longinus is not a Stoic, he could scarcely have failed to be influenced by the Stoics. In chapter 7, he praises—in accordance with Stoic doctrine—the man who rejects all external goods, for such a man recognizes that they are not within his control; he rejects them through greatness of soul. There are, moreover, a great number of similarities in terminology with the Stoics.[7] But Longinus differs with them fundamentally on the important matter of natural decay; a cyclic conception of death and rebirth is a prominent feature of Stoicism (*e.g.*, Chrysippus [von Arnim II.337 entry #1174]). This theory is applied in various simplified forms by Cicero, Seneca the Elder, and Tacitus as a possible explanation for the decline in oratorical greatness. But for Longinus, with his emphasis on nature as the source and model for both sublimity and its allied technique, a theory of cyclical decay would have been anathema—and he so indicates by never treating it as worthy of rational attention.

## *The Translation*

There are a number of English versions of Longinus; this translation alone may claim to be an instrument of explication. Earlier English versions are readable, literate, and sometimes felicitous, but they are too often nothing more than paraphrase, looser and freer than what passed for translation in the eighteenth century.

The argument for such free versions is twofold: first, individual Greek words often have nuances that would be lost if the same English word were used each time, and, since context enables the translator to know which nuance is intended, he feels justified in using as many English words for the one Greek term as he chooses. Second, English idiom often does not allow the same word to be used each time. It seems, however, worthwhile to have at least one version which will provide the English reader with a diction as consistent as possible, a close approximation of Longinus' syntax, and—by means of these—an appreciation of his tone of learned elegance and aca-

[7]For example, a striking collocation of the key words Longinus employs appears in Zeno (von Arnim I.52, item #216) in a passage cited by Stobaeus, who says that the statement holds both for Zeno and the other Stoics who stemmed from him. The serious man is described by four adjectives: great (μέγας), solid (ἀδρός), sublime ( ὕψος / ὑψηλός ),and strong ( ἰσχυρός ). Longinus, as perhaps need not be said, conjoins sublimity ( ὕψος) and great (μέγας) many times. Such terms, of course, would be natural enough for anyone writing about virtues, whether moral or aesthetic. "Strong ( ἰσχυρός )" is another such term, and even "solid ( ἀδρός )" is explicable in this way, but the combination of all four seems, however, to call for some special comment, especially as all four appear several times each in chs. 7 and 8.

demic playfulness.

We have made the following translation of *On the Sublime* with these points in mind. To remedy the defects—though creating new ones of our own—we first compiled by computer an index of verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and particles appearing in the Greek text. Use of this enabled us to make the vocabulary quite consistent. Students who do not know Greek but who wish to "explicate" Longinus will, we hope, find this translation serviceable.

Next, we avoided many standard translations of major critical terms in Longinus. The word "frigidity," for example, as a term for a stylistic vice has no meaning nowadays, although our own age is the special victim of this mania. Hence we have translated it as "false wit," and for its allied terms μειρακιώδης and παιδαριώδης we have used "undergraduate wit" and "adolescent humor." The terms were not chosen to "jazz up" a classic; they are expressions currently used in the academic world to designate vices of style popular among the "bright young men" who write for *Playboy*, *Esquire*, and *Time*.

We have sought to be as literal as possible, even when we have had to stretch normal English idiom to do so; we have endeavored to follow the syntax of the original as closely as English syntax allows. Though this will produce some periods rather lengthy for modern taste, it is necessary to show two things: Longinus' mastery of organized argument and his skill, now playful, now malicious in exemplifying the device, or vice, which he is discussing as he discusses it. We hope by this means to capture and convey Longinus' tone of learned elegance.

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# Abbreviations

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|---|---|
| Dating | John M. Crossett and James A. Arieti, *The Dating of Longinus.* University Park, PA, 1975. |
| LSJ | Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, rev. Henry Stuart Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon.* Oxford, 1968. |
| Rabe | Hugo Rabe, *Rhetores Graeci.* Leipzig, 1913-. |
| Roberts | W. Rhys Roberts, *On the Sublime.* Cambridge, England, 1899, 1907. |
| Russell | D.A. Russell, *'Longinus': On the Sublime.* Oxford, 1964, 1968. |
| Segal | Charles Segal, "Ὕψος and the Problem of Cultural Decline." *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 54(1959):121 ff. |
| Spengel | Leonard Spengel, *Rhetores Graeci.* Leipzig, 1853-1956. |
| Walz | Christian Walz, *Rhetores Graeci.* Osnabruck, 1968. |

*The following translations are referred to by the name of the translator.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Pearce | Zacharias Pearce, *Dionysii Longini De sublimitate commentarius.* [In Latin] London, 1751. |
| Smith | William Smith, *Dionysius Longinus on the Sublime.* London, 1739. |
| Roberts | W. Rhys Roberts, *Longinus, On the Sublime.* Cambridge, England, 1899. |
| Prickard | Arthur O. Prickard, *Longinus on the Sublime.* Oxford, 1906. |
| Fyfe | W. Hamilton Fyfe, *"Longinus" on the Sublime.* London, 1927. |
| Einarson | Benedict Einarson, *Longinus, On the Sublime, and Sir Joshua Reynolds, Discourses on Art.* Chicago, 1935. |
| Grube | G.M.A. Grube, *Longinus, On Great Writing.* New York, 1957 |
| Russell | D.A. Russell, *Longinus on the Sublime.* Oxford, 1965. |
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# LONGINUS

# On the Sublime

## Chapter 1

# Introduction

THOUGH as we looked into the little prose-account which Caecilius arranged about the sublime, it appeared to us in common, my dearest

Longinus begins with a sentence which consists of some 100 words. Such complex periods originate partly in the nature of the Greek language, partly in the conscious development of that nature made by the great rhetoricians, notably Isocrates, and handed down to Cicero, through whom the tradition and practice came to be the foundation of the mental apparatus still characteristic of the western world. We may, in English, think of such writers as Hooker, Milton—both in prose and poetry—and Ruskin.

The first sentence is divided into three main parts, each part clearly marked in Greek in a way which contemporary English cannot fully or easily imitate. The basic sentence may be reduced to its main clauses thus:

a) Caecilius' book is not up to its subject;
b) still, though he leaves out what is the essential matter, he does try;
c) notwithstanding his failure, Caecilius deserves praise for taking the subject seriously.

As the skeletonized sentence makes clear, the first two clauses deal with the book itself and are substantive; the third clause is personal and deals with the author: it is a gesture of decent good will.

When to the skeleton we attach all the subordinate clauses, the period reveals, like the opening sentence of *Paradise Lost,* a mind which has thought out its argument before beginning to write and which sustains that "just subordination of means to end" which Housman praised in Milton. Its inspiration is Apollonian rather than Dionysiac; for later examples of long sentences in English which lack such just subordination, see ch. III, n. on **beyond the tragic.**

**looked into:** the custom of reading together was ancient even by the time of Longinus. Although Aristotle is generally credited with the first private library—Plato even refers to him as "the reader"—we find that Socrates and his friends read together the books written "by the ancient wise men" (Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.6.14). See W. B. Stanford, *The Sound of Greek: Studies in the Greek Theory and Practice of Euphony.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967, ch. 1.

**little prose account:** this term is diminutive and slightly pejorative in the Greek. In 32.8, Longinus refers to the "prose account"which Caecilius wrote on Lysias. The non-diminutive form often signifies a systematic work as distinct from notes, or jottings, or even an informal essay.

**Caecilius:** it is virtually certain that Longinus is rebutting the views of Caecilius

Postumius Terentianus, as you understand, lower than what he had set down as the whole basis of the subject, not at all to touch on what is just right, and not to have much advantage for those who happen upon it—something every writer should aim at—if, of course, these two things are requisite in every technical investigation: first, to show what underlies the subject; the other, second in order of arrangement but more important in its capacity for effect, to show how and by what orderly ways the sublime may

of Calacte, a rhetorical theorist whose life spanned the first century B.C. and the first century A.D. and who was a friend, and contemporary, of Dionysius of Halicarnassus. See *Dating*.

**Postumius Terentianus:** The identification of Terentianus is closely linked with the problem of establishing dates for Longinus (see *Dating*). As the very Greek text of the name is corrupt, and as no firm identification has been made, we can only say the following: (a) Longinus, in the ancient fashion, dedicates the book to Terentianus; (b) it would appear that the relationship between the two was close—perhaps of teacher to student, whether formally or informally; (c) as the name is (or seems to be) Roman, it is possible to assume that he was a young Roman of distinguished family for whom Longinus wrote the treatise as part of the young man's education.

**lower than what he had set down as the whole basis of the subject:** A complex joke, which probably alludes to style, size, and thematic conception in Caecilius' treatise. Even so exalted a topic as "the sublime" was a *sub*ject as well as a *theme*—hence the word "basis" or "theme" (literally, in Greek, a *hypothesis*, "a setting under"). Longinus implies that Caecilius did not even rise to the basis. See also ch. 38, n. on **introduction** for addition etymological puns.

**what is just right:** the word in Greek normally suggests "opportune moments"; Longinus is censuring Caecilius not simply for having omitted the main points, but also for having missed the opportunities to touch on them. He lists three defects in Caecilius' work: inadequacy of style and conception; failure to make anything of the opportunities that he did have; lack of usefulness.

**technical investigation:** the Greek word signifies a rationale of the rules for an art. Longinus' own work is the supreme example of a "technical investigation" infused with literary greatness both in its style and its conception; and, of course, it has usefulness.

**second in order . . . capacity for effect:** Longinus is well aware that dramatic impact and logical order are not necessarily coincident. Russell, remarking on Longinus' familiarity with Demosthenes, cites as a parallel antithesis *Olynthiac* 3.15. The echo of Demosthenes is of even further significance, for the orator says there, "Doing, though later in order of arrangement than speaking, is prior in capacity and stronger." By means of the submerged allusion, Longinus is, as early as the first sentence, marking out not only *that* he differs from Caecilius but also *how*: later in the work (Chs. 32-33), Longinus will take up his defense of Demosthenes

be attained by us; nevertheless, Caecilius, though he tries to show us, as if we were ignorant of it, what sort of thing the sublime essentially is by tens of thousands of examples, has left aside as unnecessary—I don't understand how—the manner in which we might have the strength to lead our natures to some increase of greatness; [2.] all the same, though, it is equally true

against the more "correct" kind of orator whom Caecilius preferred. Furthermore, the passage from Demosthenes discusses speech and action; analogously, Longinus is discussing the theory of speech and its active effect: as speech is prior to action chronologically, although action is the more effective element of the two, so stating the nature of one's subject is logically prior to the effect produced by the subject, although the effect is the more important of the two elements.

**how and by what kinds of orderly ways:** *i.e.*, "methods," a word which points to the main line of Longinus' argument—that a technique for sublimity exists. Nature is necessary, but even nature can be improved upon by techniques (1.1); method enables us to know when to go beyond nature and when to recognize the "right moment" in each thing (2.2); and nature herself is "not without method" (2.2).

**what sort of thing . . . essentially is:** the Greek literally means "to begin (from) underneath," *i.e.*, to be present in a thing at and from its beginning to be whatever it is and to continue being there throughout its existence. In the phrase "what sort of thing" and "by what methods" we hear the authentic voice of the Greek mind yearning for the kind of knowledge which was philosophically certain and demonstrable. The ancient rhetorical theoreticians seem never to have found such certainty of knowledge, although they kept on trying. The failure to find such an intellectual basis of rhetoric prevented rhetoric from attaining the status of philosophy. Each successive generation of rhetoricians seems to have bewailed the failure of its predecessors to establish rhetoric as a true theory: *e.g.*, Hermogenes (*On Ideas* I.193; p. 217 in Rabe's edition). Rhetoricians seem never to have accepted Aristotle's observation, that one can only be as precise as the nature of the subject matter allows. Perhaps, in view of the fact that their subject matter was *logos*, they may be forgiven. The explanation for their mistake lies in the twofold nature of *logos*: see below, n. on **speeches and writing** and Introduction.

**tens of thousands of [examples]:** the Greek might mean "at vast length," but since Caecilius' treatise was termed a "little prose-account," it seems better to assume that Caecilius used a tiresome number of examples as a means of defining the sublime.

**to lead our natures . . . to greatness:** the almost otiose fullness of the expression, both in Greek and English, calls attention to Longinus' important and subtle point: the progress of anything natural, whether a disease (cf. Galen, 1.198) or a political constitution (cf. Aristotle, *Politics* 1293a27) is analyzable and, to some degree, controllable by technique and method. Similarly, Theodorus says to Socrates of the young Theaetetus (*Theae-*

that the man is not so much to be held responsible for what he has left out as worthy to be praised for his seriousness and his very eagerness to perceive. But since you have enjoined me [especially] to collect notes on sublimity for your sake, why, let us look to see whether we shall have theorized on something useful for men in political life. You, yourself, fellow pupil, as is

*tetus* 146B) that it is the nature of youth to be capable of "improving" at everything. Dio Cassius (7.26.7) speaks of "ambition for improvement." Hence, according to Longinus, man's natural disposition to respond to what is great and to become great (cf. ch. 35) could be "improved." Such improvement requires strength, and strength can be developed by practice (2.2), which in turn depends on technique and method. As one trains for greatness in body, so one must train for greatness of mind and spirit. The analogy is developed explicitly by Thoreau in *Walden*, the chapter entitled "Reading":

> To read well, that is, to read true books in a true spirit, is a noble exercise, and one that will task the reader more than any exercise which the customs of the day esteem. It requires a training such as the athletes underwent, the steady intention almost of the whole life to this object. Books must be read as deliberately and reservedly as they were written.

**the man is not so much to be held responsible. . . .:** the academic courtesy is exquisite in its patronizing deference.

**but since:** the clause beginning with "but" corresponds to the preceding clause, which began with the words "all the same, though"; hence this clause is properly a part of the opening sentence, although editors do not thus print it. Longinus implicitly contrasts himself with Caecilius, who apparently volunteered to write on the topic in a formal fashion: Longinus collects his notes, under some pressure from the young Roman, Terentianus, who somehow seems to have a claim on him. The verb translated "enjoined" is used of encouragement and command. Longinus was perhaps a sort of tutor who occupied the dubious position of all teachers—at once superior and inferior.

**theorized on something useful for men in political life:** if Terentianus was a young man about to embark on public life, we may assume that one source for his encouragement of Longinus lay precisely here: Longinus belonged to the ancient tradition in which men preserved the organic connection between the various senses of *logos*, that is, of the vital relationship existing between *ratio* and *oratio* as they affected civic duty. Longinus was concerned primarily with political rather than "display" or epideictic oratory—although he was fully aware of the part which all branches of rhetoric had to play even in political oratory: his hero is not the theoretician of such political oratory—Isocrates—but its most sublime practitioner, Demosthenes.

The word "political," of course, had a broader range of applications in antiquity than it generally does now. English "civic" might perhaps be more accurate, or "public" if we took it in the Miltonic sense:

I call therefore a complete and

> generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully and magnanimously all the offices both private and public of peace and war. (*Of Education*)

For the ancient idea, see Plato, *Laws* 1.644, and Aristotle, *Politics* 1333b1-5.

Any speech made "in public"—before a ruler, in an assembly, in a court, on an embassy—would be "political." Thucydides' Funeral Oration, like our Fourth of July orations, was "political," in this sense. In the rhetorical handbooks, of course, the word "political" can refer to any kind of speech. Longinus seems to be trying to rescue speech from its sophistic degeneration: see Glenn W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1969). Longinus chooses, as the one Roman orator whom he discusses, the practical politician Cicero, not the epideictic Pliny, whose *Panegyricus* so stunned the young Marcus Aurelius (see Ch. 3, n. on **beyond the tragic**). For examples of the influence which professionally rhetorical speeches could have, at least in the second and later centuries A.D., see Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists:* Scopelian's famous speech on the vines (520); Polemo's speech persuading Hadrian to devote ten million drachmas to restoring Smyrna (531); and Aristides' speech, also about Smyrna, which even in the reading moved Marcus Aurelius to tears, after which the emperor helped to rebuild that ruined city. (See Glenn Bowersock, *The Rise of the Second Sophistic.)*

Longinus' theoretical writings are being addressed, apparently, to a Roman youth, and not to a would-be professional rhetorician. The usefulness of theory—what we call "pure research"—to practical uses goes back at least to Plato and Aristotle; for its allegorical usefulness, Philo (*On the Contemplative Life,* 78) writes:

> The logical soul unfolds the allegorical symbols of Scripture and brings into the light thoughts for those who are capable, on the basis of a little reminder, of theorizing the invisible out of the visible.

Such is the allegorical equivalent of Aristotle's common-sense advice—to take the student from what is more known to what is less known.

**fellow pupil:** the Greek word goes back to Homer, where it indicates that peculiar relationship of simultaneous equality and inferiority which existed between a chief and his comrades-at-arms. Later it came to be used of a pupil or disciple. If the relationship existing between Longinus and Terentianus was a good example of that mocked by Lucian in his essay "The Rhetoric Teacher"—a Greek intellectual hired by a wealthy Roman household—then Longinus occupied that anomalous position of all teachers; simultaneously inferior and superior.

Longinus uses the term, always in the vocative, five times; the range of tones is extensive, for only two are the same. Here, in ch. 1, Longinus makes his most detailed appeal to the young man, whom he also addresses as "dear" and "dearest," often with his name:

a. "dearest Terentianus": 1.1; 12.4; 29.2; 44.1.

b. 'dearest": 1.3; 7.1; 13.2; 17.1.

Only once does Longinus use the more formal "O" without the superlative "dearest" (6.1).

Twice hereafter (9.6 and 26.2) Terentianus is instructed to "gaze at" or "behold" some example of sublimity adduced by Longinus. Once (9.10), in

your nature and your duty, will critically decide with me most truly about each part of the topic; you see, he spoke well, who, when asked what we have similar to the gods, answered, "good deeds and truth." 3. In writing to you, my dear friend, as one knowing culture, I am almost freed from setting down in many words that sublimity is a kind of height and conspic-

the same chapter as one of the previous uses of "fellow pupil," Longinus apologizes for adducing more examples: "Perhaps I would not be troublesome, fellow pupil, if I should set down one more citation . . . ."

The exact modulations of tone in each passage suggest a real relationship and not the sort of conventional one which we find in Seneca's epistles or Edward Young's *Night-Thoughts.*

**as is your nature and your duty:** nature, of course, is the prime requisite for all things (2.2); but nature of all kinds can be improved by technique. Cf. Pope's *Essay on Criticism* I.68-691, esp. 888-91:

> Those rules of old, discover'd, not devised,
> Are Nature still, but Nature methodized;
> Nature, like Liberty, is but restrained
> By the same laws which first herself ordain'd.

Men by nature—as Aristotle says (*Metaphysics* 980a1)—desire to understand; because their nature is such, they have a duty to develop their understanding. The Greek word translated "duty" is equivalent to the Latin *officium;* literally, the Greek means "to go along in accordance with"; it is the regular Stoic term for duty—which would, of course, be "natural" for a Stoic. As Terentianus has developed one part of his nature ethically—to be disposed toward truth—so he has developed another part of his nature critically—to be disposed toward sound literary judgment. The two are to coincide in his comments on Longinus' work. Russell aptly cites parallels from Pliny and Tacitus on this kind of friendly criticism.

**most truly:** Aristotle, in a famous passage (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1096a16), had said, "Truth is more sacred to us than our friends." Longinian emphasis on truth in criticism comes to a sublime height in ch. 6.

**good deeds and truth:** Arsenius (*Viol,* p. 189) attributes the apophthegm to Demosthenes; see also Aelian, *Miscellaneous Stories,* xxi. 59, where a similar statement is attributed to Pythagoras. In view of Longinus' love of Demosthenes, it is more probable that Demosthenes did not utter these words than that Longinus did not know that the orator said them.

**as one knowing culture:** the Greek word is cognate with a verb which can signify "to know how" to do something, like the French *savoir.* It implies not just practical skill, but skill based on theoretical knowledge.

The word "culture" (*paideia*) and its significance are the special and luminous province of the late Werner Jaeger, in his book *Paideia.* The word is formed from the root for "child" and signifies initially what one does to a child:

uous excellence in speeches and writings, and that from no other source than this have the greatest poets and prose-writers excelled and thrown around their glorious reputations the mantle of the ages. 4. What is beyond nature drives the audience not to persuasion, but to ecstasy. What is wonderful, with its stunning power, prevails everywhere over that which aims merely at persuasion and at gracefulness. The ability to be persuaded lies in us, but what is wonderful has a capability and force which, unable to be fought, take a position high over every member of the audience. Experience in originality, and arrangement and "economy" are not things we see from one or two passages, but we see them appearing gradually from the whole web of speeches and writings; and sublimity, brought out at just the right moment, makes everything different, like lightning, and directly shows the "all-at-once" capacity of the speaker. I think, my most pleasant Terentianus, that you yourself, from experiment, might suggest these and similar reflections.

upbringing, educating, civilizing.

Ancient *paideia* consisted of two parts: the education of the body was called "gymnastics," that of the soul was called "music." The word "music," of course, did not simply mean what we call "music" but rather the whole spectrum of activities presided over by the Muses. Quite early it was formalized into something like the "liberal arts"; by the time of Longinus, *paideia* embraced a full circle of disciplines in general studies, *i.e.*, those preceding professional specialization. These consisted generally of literature, rhetoric, mathematics, music, logic, and astronomy. Quintilian 1.10.1 ff. discusses the course of studies at length.

We may, perhaps, deduce from the phrase that Terentianus was at the end rather than at the beginning of his "college days," and perhaps had finished them and was embarking on his professional studies.

**speeches and writings:** the Greek word is *logos*, which, when used by Longinus in the plural, refers to both speeches and writings.

The logos-hymn of Isocrates (*Nicocles* 5.9) is the earliest great tribute to that faculty which man has always considered to be what separates and distinguishes him from the beasts. Nowadays, when we have extended the meaning of "language" to include any system of communication, whether of computers or porpoises, we are perhaps less certain of the distinction. Isocrates observes that we use the same *logos* in reasoning with ourselves that we use in persuading others; the dual nature of *logos*, internal and external, causes the modern reader to find difficulty in both conception and translation of the Greek word. Philo, *On the Migration of Abraham* 71, draws the following analogy:

$$\frac{\text{spring}}{\text{outflow}} :: \frac{\text{thought}}{\text{speech}}$$

We may take the combination of thought, or intention, and tongue, or speech, to be *logos*.

**beyond nature . . . ecstasy:** this sentence contains three key terms, to be com-

mented on *seriatim*.

a) **beyond nature:** this is one word in Greek, the prefix of which is *hyper*, as in "hyperbolic" or "hyperthyroid," *i.e.*, the prefix suggests an excessive condition, generally bad but not necessarily so. Longinus uses the word three other times, in two of them with specific reference not simply to what is unusual or even incredible, but to what is divine. In 9.6, he says that Homer's pictures of the war in heaven are "beyond nature"; in 16.2, he praises an oath made by Demosthenes as being "beyond nature." The use in 9.4 is similar, for Longinus argues that only those whose imaginative sensitivity responds not to earthly and temporal things but to eternal glory can perceive what is "beyond nature." The state produced by what is "beyond nature" will, then, be itself something more than is natural. The two states—the natural and the "hypernatural"—are classified by Longinus as "persuasion" and "ecstasy."

b) **persuasion:** persuasion is personified as a goddess as far back as Hesiod and Sappho, and we may presume that Longinus is playing on this fact: though a goddess, Persuasion is not "hypernatural," as is ecstasy. Throughout Greek literature, persuasion is opposed to "force" or "violence," and always indicates voluntary acquiescence as a result of *logos* (see Xenophon *Memorabilia* 2.1.13). Such *logos* is, of course, dependent on and consonant with nature: Philo, for example, who misses no chance to allegorize, says of *logos* that it is the greatest good given to man by nature (*Who is the Heir* 302). What Longinus intends by "ecstasy" is a mental state almost mystically beyond *logos:* although it may be brought about by *logos*, in the sense of speech, it may also transcend speech; and it may even be brought about by silence (see 9.2, which immediately precedes a discussion of what is "beyond nature"). Philo discusses the operations of his mind in a similar way in *On the Migration of Abraham* 34-35, and in language very similar to the way in which Longinus analyzes inspiration in ch. 13.

c) **ecstasy:** the word signifies, literally, "a standing outside of." Philo (*Who is the Heir* 249 ff.) classifies four kinds of "ecstasy": 1) a maniac fury or some similar cause which produces unreason in old age or melancholy; 2) an intense astonishment at things which are accustomed to happen suddenly and unexpectedly; 3) a quietude of thought; 4) the best kind, *i.e.*, an inspired state of being possessed and of madness as well, which prophets make use of. Longinian ecstasy is a combination of (2) and (4). Here in ch. 1, in the following sentence, Longinus uses "astonishment"; in ch. 13 he compares the effect produced by the divine afflatus on the priestess at Delphi to that produced on the creative soul by the great artists of the past. A fragment of Epicurus (21) suggests that "ecstasy" (translated by Bailey as "a state of fury") is connected with literary activity: "This drove him to such a state of fury that he abused me and ironically called me master."

## Chapter 2

# Nature and Technique

BUT we are to investigate at the beginning whether there is a technique for sublimity or profundity, for some think that those who reduce such matters to handbooks of technical pronouncements are on the whole

**technique:** Aristotle observes that technique (often translated "art") imitates nature (*Physics* 194a21), unlike Oscar Wilde, who said that nature imitates art. In *Metaphysics* 980a28, Aristotle says that experience deals with the particular, technique with the universal. It comes into being, he says (*Metaphysics* 1047b33), by learning. It differs from science thus: where science is concerned with being, technique is concerned with what comes into being (*Posterior Analytics* 100a8). In *The History of Animals* 640a31, Aristotle defines "technique" as the *logos* of a work without matter. And, perhaps most relevant for Longinus, in *Nicomachean Ethics* 1140a7 ff., Aristotle says that *technique* is a kind of disposition characterized by *logos* that is "poetic" (*i.e.*, productive) as distinct from "practical." It is in this last passage that Aristotle cites the famous remark of the tragic poet Agathon: "Technique loves chance and chance loves technique." The Stoic definition, found in the *Fragments of the Ancient Stoics* ([ed. von Arnim], 1.73; 2.93), is repeated almost exactly by Philo, in the middle of the first century A.D. (*On the Preliminary Studies* 41): a technique is a system of apprehension of things worked into a unity with some beneficially useful end in mind.

In the opening passage of the *Rhetoric* (1354a6-11)—a passage which seems to underlie the diction and argument of ch. 2 as a whole—Aristotle explains the preliminary conditions for a technique: some, he says, engage in rhetorical usage at random, others by custom and habit; hence it "is clear that it should be possible to do these things by a way or method." Whenever, he suggests, men do something either automatically or by habit, the subject allows for theoretical investigation of the cause, and "by now," says Aristotle, "all would agree that such a subject is the work of a technique." For the difference between knowledge and technique see Ch. 6, n. on **pure knowledge and critical decision.**

**handbooks of technical pronouncements:** the word "pronouncement" had a technical meaning by the time of Longinus: "the edict of a Roman governor." In classical Greek it signified an order or command that had been transmitted. It was also used to mean the precepts of a philosophical or literary school. Our word "rule" in its narrower sense is a good equivalent. The later rhetoricians often make it sound as if one could be a great writer merely by following the "rules" which they had distilled from their minute studies of the masters. It would appear that antiquity, too, had its "neo-classic rules,"

misled. You see, they say that things great in nature are innate and not teachable; that nature is the only technique for getting them: the workings of nature are made worse and more wretched when reduced to the bare bones by technical handbooks. 2. But I declare that it will be proven otherwise, if anyone would look to see for himself that in passages that are emotional and lofty nature often loves to be a rule unto herself and does not love to be random and without an orderly way of presenting things; and that it is nature which underlies all things as a kind of first element and archetype of creating, though technique is sufficient to know "how much"

against which many romantically rebelled. See also following note.

**things great in nature . . . are innate . . . not teachable:** compare the Latin, and English, proverb: "Poets are born, not made"—an amusing use of "made," in view of the English use of "maker" to designate a poet. The romantic quality of the criticism is familiar in our own culture, *e.g.,* Wordsworth's lines "we murder to dissect" and the reaction to the neo-classicism of the eighteenth century which we find in Keats and Shelley and, in our own day, in D. H. Lawrence and the contemporary hallucinogenic poets.

The debate conducted in antiquity on what part "nature" played and what part was played by "art," or "technique," was long and sterile, as such arguments usually are. The great critics and poets have always recognized the place of both. Behind this particular form of the debate lies the Socratic problem (*Meno* and *Protagoras*) of whether virtue is teachable.

**I declare that it will be proven otherwise:** Longinus contrasts himself with his opponents both by the dramatic use of "I" and by the fullness of his expression: "proven otherwise." The "romantic view" he regards as a sentiment; his own position is capable of "proof."

**a rule unto herself:** from the Greek word we derive "autonomy." The word almost means "automatically," and yet not "licentiously." Himerus (*Oration* I.1) uses it to mean "poetic license," though this is very late Greek. As far back as Herodotus, the term signifies "living by one's own rules," *i.e.,* independence. It is easy to see how the idea shades off into "spontaneity."

**first element and archetype:** the adjective "first" may be construed with both nouns. Both "element" and "archetype" are used only here in Longinus. The rhetorical "doublet" is not merely rhetorical: "element" suggests the tone and style of authors like Aristotle and Euclid, "archetype" suggests Plato, each of whom contributes to the intellectual milieu of Longinus, both of whom he seeks to harmonize and combine—a sort of esthetic Boethius. Philo, in *Who is the Heir* 126, sets us the following analogy:

$$\frac{\text{divine wisdom}}{\text{human wisdom}} :: \frac{\text{genus}}{\text{species}} :: \frac{\text{archetype}}{\text{imitation}}$$

**"how much"** literally, "how muchnesses"; that is, a sense of proper magnitude, of knowing when to stop. The

to say and the right moment in each case and also to provide a fixed discipline and usage; and that great things are subject to danger when left alone by themselves, apart from knowledge, unsteady like ships without ballast, left to impulse and unlearned audacity; as they ought to have the spur, so ought they to have the bridle. 3. Just what Demosthenes used to say about the common life of mankind—that good luck is the greatest of

word also appears in 12.1, where development (*amplificatio*) is said to consist of "quantity and abundance."

**a discipline:** the Greek word translated here as "discipline" gives us our English word "ascetic." In Greek, it indicates military and gymnastic exercise, and then, by extension, intellectual practice, as distinct from theory and even from teaching: for example, Philo (*On the Preliminary Studies* 69) says that he who acquires what is fine by discipline and not by teaching listens not to what is said but rather to him who says it, and imitates his life. In later Greek (from the 1st century A.D. on), the word also signifies a philosophical or religious sect. In Christian writers the noun signifies a monk or hermit.

**without knowledge . . . unsteady . . . without ballast:** the clause contains one abstraction and two images. In the phrase "without knowledge," Longinus uses the strongest word for intellectual certainty known to the ancient Greeks. The definition of "knowledge," from Aristotle, through the Stoics, down to the first century A.D., as well as thereafter, is remarkably consistent: an apprehension that cannot be tripped up, that is strong and sure, and that cannot be faulted by argument (see *Fragments of the Ancient Stoics* 1.68; Philo, *On The Preliminary Studies* 41). Cf. also definition of "technique" in the n. on *technique* above. The pilot is a Platonic symbol for such abstract knowledge: in the *Theaetetus* 144A, Plato uses the image of "ships without ballast," an image which, as Russell's note on this passage demonstrates, was frequently imitated. An extended parallel, not mentioned by Russell, occurs in Dio Cassius (52.16.3): "Our city, just as a *great* merchant-ship filled with a varied throng of all kinds, *without a pilot,* for many generations now being borne in huge waves, *reels and is driven here and there,* just as if *without ballast"* (italics added).

**unlearned audacity:** the word "audacity" can be either honorific or pejorative, much like such English words as "dare" or "nerve" (as in the phrase "to have the nerve to" do something; see ch. 32, n. on **mollifying**). It is, however, always pejorative in Longinus. "Unlearned" is the adjectival form of the regular Platonic word for "ignorance."

**spur . . . bridle:** a famous and popular image; see Russell's note for classical parallels in Isocrates, Plato, and Aristotle. For a striking variation on the idea to be found in contemporary literature, see Roy Campbell's comment on some novelists who were praised for writing "with firm restraint":

> They use the snaffle and the bit,
> but where's the bloody horse?
> (*On Some South African Novelists*)

**what Demosthenes used to say:** the pas-

goods, but second, no less important, is making good plans (and if the second is not present, it will entirely remove the value of good luck)—I would say about speeches and writings: nature has charge of good luck, technique of good planning. But what is most important is that we can learn from no other source than technique what in speeches and writings depends wholly on nature. If, as I declare, he who looks down on those engaged in useful learning would make for himself a peroration of these

sage can be found in Demosthenes, *Against Aristocrates* 113; Longinus has paraphrased accurately. Russell also cites Isocrates I.34, to which we may add Agathon's aphorism, quoted by Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1147a19-20): "technique loves chance and chance loves technique."

**learn from no other source than technique:** the point, which Longinus takes up again in Ch. 8, lies at the heart of his solution to the old problem of whether poets are born or made: nature vs. technique. Most sensible critics agreed that there had to be both; it is the special and unique contribution of Longinus that, without denying the validity of the distinction or the terms, he shows how even what nature has to give is explicable and learnable only in terms of technique—at least "by now," as he remarks in 8.1 (see ch. 8, notes on **capacity for speaking** and **those left come from technique**). It is clear that Longinus wishes to deny the claim of those critics who thought that "natural talent" is beyond the limits of critical analysis—a kind of critic still with us, especially since the Romantics.

In the verb "learn" (literally, "learn utterly"), Longinus emphasizes that there is much more to be learned, that the limits of the subject have yet to be reached; and in what remains of his work, we can see how far he extends those limits beyond what we know of previous critics, as well as of many since.

**make...a peroration of these things:** peroration is the concluding section of a speech, in which the speaker is to sum up his case with all the techniques of persuasion at his disposal. Quintilian, for example—a sober critic—suggests that in a peroration one may "pour on every emotion and endow persons with imaginary speeches and rouse up the dead [*i.e.*, imagine dead men as speaking (4.1.28); see ch. 16]." The root of the Greek word for "peroration" is *logos*, which means both "speech" and "reason." Longinus, then, is asking his critics to go through a complete process of reasoning with themselves, cast in the form of a speech, *i.e.*, rhetoric, with a peroration of such nature as to convince themselves.

Longinus appeals to the jury of his fellow and rival critics to take his introductory remarks, his "prooemium," as an invitation to "perorate," to reason out with and for themselves, the logical conclusion of his arguments even if they should not choose to read what he has to say about the act of criticism. To do otherwise, to argue as a critical principle that critical analysis of greatness and sublimity is impossible, is to deny the possibility of criticism. Since the material both of Longinus and such critics consists of speeches, which have both prooemium and peroration, such

things, he would no longer consider theorizing on the subject "too much" and useless.

critics would be denying the very form which they praise, and, in addition, would cut themselves off from sincere students of useful learning.

Chapter 3

# Vices: Turgidity, Undergraduate Wit, Parenthyrson

...hold the mighty brilliance of the kiln.
If I behold a single hearth-abider here,
I'll thrust within one stormy-flowing tentacle
Igniting and incinerating all the roof:
Not yet have I yelled out a noble melody.

These conceits—the "tentacles" and "skyward vomitings," the making

**hold . . . melody:** this incomplete passage, which picks up at the end of a lacuna, is generally attributed to a lost play entitled *Orithyia*; whether it was written by Aeschylus or by the early Sophocles, in that period when, as he said, he was imitating Aeschylean bombast (Plutarch, *Moralia* 79b), is disputed. Russell canvasses the differing arguments in his note. Longinus praises Sophocles for being the kind of genius who achieves great heights but who also falls and fails (see ch. 23, where he is bracketed with Pindar). Such a view is based, of course, on a knowledge of many more plays than we possess; our earliest Sophoclean play probably dates from a time when Sophocles was about 50. The Longinian view is far removed from that of Matthew Arnold, who viewed Sophocles as serene and calm, as one who "saw life steadily and saw it whole" (Sonnet, *To a Friend*). Plutarch, however, comments on Sophoclean "unevenness" ("On Listening to Lectures" 45b). Hume (Essay 20, *Of Simplicity and Refinement in Writing*) remarks that Sophocles and Terence seem to have gone beyond the mean of perfection and to have been "guilty of some excess" in refinement.

The speaker in the passage quoted seems to be Boreas, the North Wind; according to the myth, Erectheus refused to give his daughter Orithyia to Boreas in marriage, whereupon Boreas carried her away. Lacking the whole quotation, and a precise context, we cannot state with certainty whether the phrase "hearth-abider" refers to a person or, perhaps, an ember in the fire. See n. on **bold** below.

**tentacles . . . flautist:** Longinus singles out some details from his original quotation, which we have lost because of a lacuna in the ms., *e.g.*, "skyward vomitings." In imagining the North Wind as a flute-player, Longinus refers to the traditional Greek view that the lyre was the instrument for gentlemen, since the flute required the player to disfigure his face by huffing and puffing. A Greek myth tells us that Athena, having tried the flute and the lyre, spurned the flute because it made her look grotesque.

North Wind a flautist, and other things of this sort—can no longer be considered "tragic," but something "beyond the tragic." They are, rather

**beyond the tragic:** the word also means "to be mock-tragic." Presumably the author of the fragment was not parodying the tragic style but failed to reach it because he went beyond it and ran contrary to it. The following examples from English literature will help illustrate the vice:

A. Hamlet quotes from a (supposed) old tragedy to the players:

> Head to foot
> Now is he total gules, horridly tricked
> With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons
> Baked and impasted with the parching streets
> That lend a tyrannous and damned light
> To their lord's murder. Roasted in wrath and fire,
> And thus o'er sized with coagulate gore,
> With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
> Old grandsire Priam seeks. (II.ii)

The passage may be contrasted with a similar one, from *Macbeth:*

> Now o'er the one-half world
> Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
> The curtain'd sleep. Witchcraft celebrates
> Pale Hecate's offerings, and withered murder,
> Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
> Whose howl 's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
> Like Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
> Moves like a ghost. (II.i)

Shakespeare's lyric narratives, especially *Venus and Adonis,* have much of this "paratragic" style.

B. Dryden and Lee, *Oedipus* (I.i):

> Dreadful indeed! Blood, and a king's blood too!
> And such a king's, and by his subject shed!
> (Else why this curse on Thebes? No wonder then
> If monsters, wars, and plagues revenge such crimes!
> If heaven be just, its whole artillery,
> All must be emptied on us: Not one bolt
> Shall err from Thebes; but more be called for, more;
> New-moulded thunder of a larger size;
> Driven by whole Jove. What, touch anointed power!
> Then, Gods, beware; Jove would himself be next
> Could you but reach him, too,

C. Melville, *Moby Dick,* Ch. XCIII, "The Castaway":

> The sea had jeeringly kept his finite body up, but drowned the infinite of his soul. Not drowned entirely, though. Rather carried down alive to wondrous depths, where strange shapes of the unwarped primal world glided to and fro before his passive eyes;

and the miser-merman, Wisdom, revealed his hoarded heaps; and among the joyous, heartless, ever-juvenile eternities, Pip saw the multitudinous, God-omnipresent, coral insects, that out of the firmament of the waters heaved the colossal orbs.

(The passage is explicable in allegorical terms; see Longinus 9.7 for insertion of allegorical justifications of Homeric passages and n. on **allegory** in Ch. 9 for an example of a modern allegorical interpretation.

D. Although the poem *Apostroph* was rejected by Whitman, it is too tempting not to quote the opening lines:

O mater! O fils!
O brood continental!
O flowers of the prairies!
O space boundless! O him of mighty products!
O you teeming cities! O son invincible, turbulent, proud!
O race of the future! O women!
O fathers! O you men of passion and the storm!
O native powers only! O beauty!
O yourself! O God! O divine average!

Beside this rhapsodic catalogue, Shelley's famous "O World! O Life! O Time!" is pallid and jejune. The true parallel for Whitman is Marcus Aurelius— in his youthful and rhetorical days—who in a letter to his rhetorical teacher Fronto exclaimed over Pliny's *Panegyricus:*

O elegantia! O lepos! O venustas!
O verba! O nitor! O argutiae!
O charites! O askesis! O omnia!

E. Tennyson, *Maud: A Monodrama* (144-9):

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the veil.
Who knows the ways of the world, how God will bring them about?
Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is wide.
Shall I weep if a Poland fall?
Shall I shriek if a Hungary fail?
Or an infant civilization be ruled with a rod or a knout?
I have not made the world, and He that made it will guide.

F. Thomas Carlyle, from *Past and Present* (IV.4):

Difficult? Yes, it will be difficult. The short-fibre cotton; that too was difficult. The waste cotton-shrub, long useless, disobedient, as the thistle by the wayside,— have ye not conquered it; made it into beautiful bandana webs; white woven shirts for men; bright-tinted air-garments wherein flit goddesses? Ye have shivered mountains asunder, made the hard iron pliant to you as soft putty; the Forest-giants, Marsh-jotuns bear sheaves of golden grain; Aegir the Sea-demon himself stretches his back for a sleek highway to you, and on Firehorses and Windhorses ye career . . . .

G. D. H. Lawrence, *The Plumed Serpent,* Ch. 7, "The Plaza":

The sound sounded in the innermost far-off place of the human core, the ever-present, where there is neither hope nor emotion, but passion sits with folded wings on

tree of shadow.

Like fate, like doom. Faith is the Tree of Life itself, inevitable, and the apples are upon us, like the apples of the eye, the apples of the chin, the apples of the heart, the apples of the breast, the apple of the belly, with its deep core, the apples of the loins, the apples of the knees, the little, side-by-side apples of the toes. What do change and evolution matter? We are the Tree with the fruit forever upon it. And we are faith forever. Verbum Sap.

H. F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (the closing passage):

> Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther. . . . And one fine morning—
>
> So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

(The seeming ellipsis is Fitzgerald's.)

I. William Faulkner, *A Fable* (Random House: New York, 1954), the chapter entitled "Tomorrow," pp. 407-08; it is also a specimen of the long and rambling Faulknerian sentence (see ch. I, n. 1):

> In time there would be a vast towered chapel, an ossuary, visible for miles across the Heights like the faintly futuristic effigy of a gigantic gray goose or an iguanodon created out of gray stone not by a sculptor but by expert masons—a long tremendous nave enclosed by niches in each of which a light would burn always, the entrance to each arched with the carven names taken not from identity discs but from regimental lists since there would be nothing to match them with—squatting over the vast deep pit into which the now clean inextricable anonymous bones of what had been man, men, would be shovelled and sealed; facing it would be the slope white with the orderly parade of Christian crosses bearing the names and regimental designations of the bones which could be identified; and beyond it, that other slope ranked not with crosses but with rounded headstones set faintly but intractably oblique to face where Mecca was, set with a consistent and almost formal awryness and carved in cryptic and indecipherable hieroglyph because the bones here had been identifiable too which had since been men come this far from their hot sun and sand, this far from home and all familiar things, to make this last sacrifice in the northern rain and mud and cold, for what cause unless their leaders, ignorant too, could have explained some of it, a little of it to them in their own tongue.

Falkner's sentence is some 260 words, longer than the opening sentence of Longinus (over 100 words); its syntax towards the end leaves something to be desired.

> Addision's remarks (*Spectator* 39) are worth noting: English poets have succeeded much better in the style than in the sentiments of their tragedies . . . . In the ancient tragedies, and indeed in those of Corneille and Racine, though the

than powerful, muddy in phrasing and turbulent in imagery, and if we should look clearly into the words and phrases, they will gradually become less frightening, and, instead, something which we sense is very much below us. In tragedy, which is by nature bold and admits bombastic mouthing, any turgidity that is not melodic is unforgivable; in speeches

> expressions are very great, it is thought that bears them up and swells them . . . . The reader, after the perusal of a scene, [should] consider the naked thought of every speech in it, when divested of all its tragic ornaments . . . . When our thoughts are great and just, they are often obscured by the sounding phrases, hard metaphors, and forced expressions in which they are clothed.

**muddy and turbulent:** the word "muddy," although used metaphorically by Philo and Dio Cassius, does not seem to have been applied in Greek to style; Longinus may therefore be parodying the vice censured by his own diction.

**bold:** this word has been variously translated: *e.g.*, "pompous" (Prickard); "dignified" (Grube); "majestic" (Dorsch); "magniloquent" (Russell); "grand" (Russell); "stately" (Roberts). It is one of the several Greek critical terms drawn from the human body, and its root-meaning is "bulk," "mass," "body," "size." The word can be applied to distentions of any kind, *e.g.*, a heap of ashes, a child in the womb, the extent of a city, an Epicurean atom, the volume of a note or voice. As a critical term, it could be either honorific or pejorative: for example, here in this sentence, it describes a good quality of tragedy; in 3.4, it is classified as "vicious" and is coupled with "puffed up." To translate the Greek term we have used the English "bold," which etymologically signified "well-filled," a "heap," what is "blown up" and "puffed" and which also conveys the sense of demanding attention by its expanding and thrusting bulk.

**mouthing:** equivalent to our "ranting and raving," the sort of thing Hamlet cautions the players against (II.ii). Addison, in *Spectator* 40, discusses "rants" as one of the "false beauties" of English tragedy.

**turgidity that is not melodic:** "melodic" may refer, in the Greek, to lyric. Since some branches of ancient lyric were even more extravagant in their diction and effects than tragedy (*e.g.*, dithyramb, from which tragedy in part developed), Longinus may be using the phrase deliberately to suggest the kind of turgidity which came to be associated with such lyric, especially later dithyramb.

How closely some critics followed Longinus, in both terminology and analysis, can be seen in this passage from John Dennis, the most avowed defender of Longinus in the eighteenth century. He was even burlesqued on the stage under the name "Sir Tremendous Longinus."

> There is a way of deviating from nature, by bombast, or tumour, which soars above nature, and enlarges images beyond their real bulk; by affection, which forsakes

and writings that are true to nature, it will hardly fit at all. 2. For this reason, Gorgias of Leontini is laughed at when he writes "Xerxes, the Zeus

> nature in quest of something unsuitable; and by imbecility, which degrades nature by faintness and diminution, by obscuring its appearances, and weakening its effects.

Johnson quotes this passage in his life of Addison; it can be found in the edition of John Dennis edited by E. N. Hooker, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1939-1943).

**speeches and writings that are true to nature:** the phrase echoes Virgil's *verae voces* (true voices) in *Aeneid* 1.409. The term "true to nature" is almost synonymous with "lifelike" or even "realistic," whether good or bad, ideal or base. Aristotle uses "true to nature" only once in the *Poetics*, at 1455a32, where he advises the poet to feel what his characters are feeling, for the poet who makes himself angry will be angry and dramatize anger "most true to nature." D. W. Lucas, in his edition of the *Poetics* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1968), collects several fine passages from modern authors illustrating this practice. Plato uses "true to nature" to mean "ideal," *i.e.*, in accordance with the world of being, when he speaks of "the city that is true to nature" (*Republic* 372E); in the *Timaeus* (26E), he distinguishes between a "moulded myth" and "an account that is true to nature," which he specifies as giving not simply the main points but the actual details just as they were heard, *i.e.*, a dramatically natural re-presentation. Longinus uses "true to nature" only one other time (7.4). See ch. 7.4, n. on **"true to nature which . . . to all men."**

**Gorgias of Leontini:** Gorgias stands as the most famous and most spectacular representative of rhetoric in the bad sense. A native of Sicily, the home of rhetorical technique, he came to Athens with his new art and made a sensational impression. His influence on morality can be gauged by the fact that Plato wrote one of his most brilliant dialogues, the *Gorgias*, against him. Gorgias' prose exploits all the vices inherent in the highly inflected and highly syntactic Greek language; Larue Van Hook has attempted to convey some sense of the Gorgianic style in an English translation of *The Encomium of Helen*, one paragraph of which we append here:

> But if by violence she [Helen] was defeated and unlawfully she was treated and to her injustice was meted, clearly her violator as a terrifer was importunate, while she, translated and violated, was unfortunate. Therefore, the barbarian who verbally, legally, actually attempted the barbarous attempt, should meet with verbal accusation, legal reprobation, and actual condemnation. For Helen, who was violated, and from her fatherland separated, and from her friends segregated, should justly meet with commiseration rather than with defamation. For he was the victor and she was the victim. It is just, therefore, to sympathize with the latter and anathematize the former.

Even if we allow for the fact that Greek takes this kind of pyrotechnical assonance and rhyme and balance more naturally than English, the effect of the Greek is peculiarly striking. Here is the opening of Lyly's *Euphues: The Anat-*

of the Persians" and "vultures, tombs with a soul"; and some of the conceits written by Callisthenes are not sublime, but high-flown, and this is still more the case with those of Cleitarchus, a worthless man who, as Sophocles

*omy of Wit,* an Elizabethan attempt to produce similar effects:

> There dwelt in Athens a young gentleman of great patrimony, and so comely a personage that it was doubted whether he were more bound to Nature for the lineaments of his person, or to Fortune for the increase of his possessions. But Nature, impatient of comparisons, and as it were disdaining a companion or copartner in her working, added to this comeliness of his body such a sharp capacity of mind that not only she proved Fortune counterfeit, but was half of that opinion that she herself was only current. This young gallant, of more wit than wealth, and yet of more wealth than wisdom, seeing himself inferior to none in pleasant conceits, thought himself superior to all in honest conditions, insomuch that he deemed himself so and to all things, that he gave himself almost to nothing but practising of those things commonly which are incident to these sharp wits, fine phrases, smooth quipping, merry taunting, using jesting without mean and abusing mirth without measure.

Lyly's prose exploits most of the devices in Gorgias—though not rhyme, for which he substitutes a heavy alliteration coupled with a subtle distinction in the meanings of words; his clauses are longer and their balance not so emphasized. The passage cited by Longinus comes from Gorgias' *Funeral Oration,* an extensive fragment of which survives (Diels-Kranz 6).

**Zeus of the Persians:** probably an echo of Herodotus 7.56; as Russell remarks in his notes, "Persian ruler-cult shocked the Greeks very much in the fifth century."

**tombs with a soul:** Russell's note is a miniature study in comparative literature on this famous conceit, which turns up in Aeschylus, Sophocles, Ennius, Lucretius, Spenser, and Shakespeare. The ancient rhetorician-critic Hermogenes specifies the vice of the image as an "excess beyond the mean in an attempt to be impressive" (Spengel 2.292), a point which becomes the basis of Johnson's censure of the metaphysical poets. In a wry aside, Hermogenes says that those who use such conceits are worthy to be buried in them. For Longinian influence on Johnson, see J. Crossett, "Did Johnson Mean 'Paraphysical'?", *Boston University Studies in English* 4(1960):121-24.

**Callisthenes:** the nephew of Aristotle, wrote a history of Alexander the Great, whom he accompanied during the invasion of Asia; a few fragments of his writings survive.

**Cleitarchus:** an Hellenistic historian, of whom, as the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* says, no ancient author speaks well. Demetrius (304) singles out an example of Cleitarchus' false wit. Describing a wasp, Cleitarchus said, "it bat-

puts it, blows "on a petite flute without a mouthpiece." Amphicrates, Hegesias, and Matris frequently believe they are exhibiting enthusiasm in their conceits, but there is no genuine Dionysiac frenzy: they are merely playing. 3. On the whole, it is likely that turgidity is one of the vices hardest to guard against. For those who commit themselves to great writing and flee the censure of being weak and dry are brought down naturally (I don't understand how) into turgidity: they are persuaded by the maxim "Failure in a great enterprise is a noble mistake." 4. But swellings and puffiness both in the human body and in speeches and writings are vicious

tens on and ravages mountains and wings its way toward the hollow oaks."

**without a mouthpiece:** the quotation does not survive except in a different form in Cicero (*Ad Atticum* 2.16.2). The mouthpiece was a device for governing sound; a flute without one would be loud and shrill all the time.

**Amphicrates, Hegesias, and Matris:** We know almost nothing of Amphicrates except that he lived in the first century B.C. and was an historian. Hegesias lived in the third century B.C. and was also an historian; a few fragments survive. He is harshly treated by the ancient critics. He was the particular *bête noire* of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who (*On Composition* 4) calls him ignoble, effeminate, addicted to petty felicities, and "the high priest" of this nonsensical style. In ch. 18, Dionysius expostulates at the badness of Hegesias' style; he quotes a passage from his history and comments on it acidly. Cicero (*Orator* 226) says that Hegesias perversely avoids short, striking phrases and "hops about," cutting his style into minute fragments. Of the Hellenistic poet Matris we know almost nothing. See Russell's note for details and references.

**enthusiasm:** generally a pejorative word in Longinus but not always. When enthusiasm is associated with favored writers, like Xenophon, or with the god Apollo, Longinus always approves of it. Such writers, of course, could exercise sound critical judgment, the result of technique, whereas Amphicrates and the others like him could not tell genuine from spurious enthusiasm. The term "enthusiasm" is highly pejorative in the eighteenth century; it is primarily a social virtue nowadays. Nietzsche used the dichotomy of Apollonian and Dionysiac enthusiasm as the basis for his youthful but influential work *The Birth of Tragedy*.

**a noble mistake:** Longinus seems to have felt about this tiresome palliation somewhat as Dionysius of Halicarnassus felt about those who always cited Agathon's paradoxically practical observation, that it is likely for many unlikely things to happen (*Letter to Ammaeus* 1.8). The idea probably derives from such sources as that paradoxical phrase, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1146a18-19), in which Aristotle says that Neoptolemus displays a "good intemperance," and from Sophocles' famous paradox to describe Antigone's action as a "holy evil" (*Antigone* 74). Our modern equivalents for the maxim

and untrue to nature, and, as a consequence, place us in a situation opposite to that where we wish to be, for as they say, nothing is drier than a man with dropsy. Well, though turgid writing wishes to transcend sublimity, the vice of undergraduate wit is totally opposed to greatness: it is wholly low and

Longinus quotes are the Emersonian maxim, "Hitch your wagon to a star" and the almost proverbial "Aim high." The counterpart is the proverb, "A miss is as good as a mile."

**drier than a man with dropsy:** "Dropsy causes thirst; and moralists used it as an analogue of covetousness or insatiable greed" (Russell). The image of dropsy picks up the charge of "feeble dryness" and continues the image of "boldness" or "swelling" (see above, n. on **bold**).

Demetrius (*On Style* 4) says that clauses which are too short produce the so-called "dry" or "arid" style—*e.g.*, "Life is short, art is long, time is fleeting." Bacon, in the early versions of his *Essays,* writes this way, and many of these short sentences are imbedded in the later versions. The vice—we would call it "bald" and even "dull" and "mechanical"—may result from diction, composition, or imagery; Demetrius (236-39) takes these up. Longinus uses the word for "dry" only twice, both times in this chapter; since he is concerned with the high, sublime, full-blooded, and vigorous style, he does not spend much time on the low, dull, dry, feeble, bloodless style.

**undergraduate wit:** the vice refers to a certain verbal dexterity which is corrupt; students writing in this style are entranced with high-flown language, with jingles and puns, with deliberately mixed levels of diction intended to shock, with arch overwriting, and with a desire to "show off." Their metaphors tend to become mixed and far-fetched. Osric's speech, in *Hamlet* (V.ii) and Hamlet's parody thereof exemplify the vice:

> *Osric*: Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes—believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing. Indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.
>
> *Hamlet:* Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you, though I know to define him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article, and his infusion of such dearth and rareness as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror, and who else would trace him, his umbrage. . . .

Or, to take a modern instance, the prose of columnist Tom Wolfe, *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York, 1963, rep. 1965), p. 22:

> And now around the eyes he looks like an aging Chinese savant, but he is wearing a white tuxedo and powder-blue leather boots and playing his sad old Western violin with an electric cord plugged in it for a group called The Country Gentleman. And there is Ben Blue, looking like a waxwork exhibit of

petty-souled and is really a most ignoble vice. Now what is "undergraduate wit"? Is it not manifest that it is that collegian way of thinking which, by working overtime to please, terminates in false wit? Though writers desire what is "just too much" and elaborate and, most of all, what is blissfully

> vaudeville, doffing his straw skimmer to reveal the sculptural qualities of his skull. And down at the Flamingo cocktail lounge—Ella Fitzgerald is in the main room—there is Harry James, looking old and pudgy in one of those toy Italian-style show-biz suits. And the Ink Spots are at the New Frontier and Louis Prima is at the Sahara, and the old parties are seeing it all, roaring through the dawn into the next day, until the sun seems like a par lamp fading in and out. The casinos, the bars, the liquor stores are open every minute of every day, like a sempiternal wading pool for the childhood ego.

Observe, for example, the disparate diction of "show-biz" and "sempiternal."

The Greek word for "undergraduate wit" refers specifically to that of a person between the ages of 14 and 21.

**opposed to:** the classification is Aristotelian: the mean defined by the extremes. Sublimity is the mean, swelling is the excess, and "undergraduate wit" is the deficiency. Longinus is generally considered a Platonist, but he is Aristotelian in his terminology and methodology, Platonic in spirit.

**collegian:** from the Greek word we derive "school." English adjectives derived from "school" (*e.g.*, "schoolboyish) make the age-group too young. Longinus is thinking of young men between the ages of 14 and 21. "Collegian" and "collegiate" convey this sense best in English: the smart-alecky nature of those called "college-kids," who seek to show off their newly-learned sophistication. Ancient Greece had its share of precocious geniuses: for example, Menander was writing prize-winning comedies at the age of 18, and the rhetorician Hermogenes was winning competitions for impromptu speaking in his middle teens.

**working overtime to please:** this is the quality of one of the "characters" portrayed by Theophrastus (10.63) and signifies the assumption and pretentiousness which arises out of good-will, when, out of benevolence, one claims more than he can perform. Menander, in the *Dyscolus* (836), has a striking use and dramatic exemplification of this word: "Your working overtime to please does you credit" (see E. W. Handley's edition of the *Dyscolus* for the text, where the term is a plausible emendation [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965]).

**false wit:** the standard translation for this term is "frigidity," which is not, however, a part of contemporary English critical vocabulary. Literally, the Greek word means "coldness" and is applied to snow, air, dead things; by extension it is applied to a cold-hearted person, and then to one who is "flat, lifeless, insipid" (LSJ). By a further extension it is used to denote a literary vice characterized by polysyllabic compounds, eccentric or excessively poetic

pleasing, they lapse into this kind of vice, and run aground on a listing and

choice of adjectives, otiose and inappropriate adjectives, and far-fetched metaphors (see Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1450b35 ff). Theophrastus, Aristotle's pupil, defines it as "being hyperbolic beyond the description appropriate to a subject" (cited by Demetrius, *On Style*, 114). The term is analyzed finely by Addison in the *Spectator* papers, notably nos. 61 and 62. In the latter he writes:

> As *true Wit* generally consists in this Resemblance and Congruity of Ideas, *false Wit* chiefly consists in the Resemblance and Congruity sometimes of single Letters, as in Anagrams, Chronograms, Lipograms, and Acrosticks: Sometimes of Syllables, as in Ecchos and Doggerel Rhymes: Sometimes of Words, as in Puns and Quibbles; and sometimes of whole Sentences or Poems, cast into the Figure of *Eggs, Axes,* or *Altars.*

We have ancient poems of this kind; Herbert wrote one in the form of wings (*Easter-wings*) and one in the form of an altar (*The Altar*); his poem *Heaven* is an echo-poem; we quote the opening four lines;

> O who will show me those delights on high:
>
> *Echo.* I.
>
> Thou Echo, thou art mortall, all men know.
>
> *Echo.* No.

The Elizabethan poet, Sir John Davies, wrote a series of 26 poems (*Hymns to Astraea*), each of which was an acrostic such that the opening letters of each line spelled out "Elisabeth Regina." Dylan Thomas has employed the device in our own day: see his poem *Vision and Prayer* in *Collected Poems* ([Dent: London, 1964], p. 137).

Many fine examples of "false wit" can be found in *The Stuffed Owl: An Anthology of Bad Verse,* ed. D. B. Wyndham Lewis and Charles Lee (J. M. Dent: London and Toronto, 1930); we quote from Samuel Carter (p. 197) describing London's sewer-system:

> Magnificent, too, is the system of drains,
> Exceeding the far-spoken wonders of old:
> So lengthen'd and vast in its branches and chains,
> That Labyrinths pass like a tale that is told:
> The sewers gigantic, like multiplied veins,
> Beneath the whole city their windings unfold,
> Disgorging the source of plagues, scourges, and pains,
> Which visit those cities to cleanliness cold.
> Well did the ancient proverb lay down this important text,
> That Cleanliness for human weal to godliness is next.

The number of vices contained in this one stanza would virtually illustrate most of those discussed by Longinus.

**what is blissfully pleasing:** Longinus uses here a highly poetic word rather than his usual term; the word itself, then, is an example of what he is warning writers to avoid. Perhaps we could approximate the effect by some such high-flown verbiage as "blissful delight."

**left aground on a listing and vicious emulation:** it is best to discuss these terms separately.

a) **Left aground**: here begins a naut-

vicious emulation. 5. There lies before us, in addition, a third species of vice in emotional passages—what Theodorus used to call *parenthyrson,*

ical metaphor. The Greek word is also used by Dio Cassius metaphorically when he suggests one of the alternative explanations for the shift in Tiberias' character: either he was a hypocrite, or "his good nature *drifted away*." Writers fall into the vice by affecting "too much," by being too audacious; they are like the unballasted ships, lacking the pilot's knowledge (see ch. 2.2, where Longinus introduced nautical imagery). Thus Polybius describes a ship that was too eager to attack and so "ran aground" (*Histories* 1.20.15).

b) **listing:** Longinus' image is of a ship which has run aground; such a ship lists sharply to one side. The term picks up the nautical metaphor.

c) **vicious emulation:** what we call "affectation" in the bad sense. Lucian, in his essay "On Dancing" (82), defines the vice thus: transgressing the measure of imitation and stretching beyond what is necessary. It may work in any direction, *e.g.,* if it be necessary to display what is big, he—like Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—who is infected with the vice makes the thing extraordinarily big; if what is necessary be soft and tender, the vice turns into effeminacy; and so forth. As an example, Lucian describes a particular dancer, imitating the madness of Ajax, so far transgressed the bounds of dramatic propriety that he came down into the audience and disturbed some of its members. Lucian makes it clear that his guilt is like that of the bad actor described by Hamlet, one who would "tear a passion to tatters" because he "imitates humanity so abominably." Demetrius (*On Style* 136) draws the following analogy: "false wit" is to "the appropriately great" as "vicious emulation" is to the the "smooth" or "elegant" style. Here the word corresponds to what we might call "preciosity" or perhaps "mannerism." In 239, however, Demetrius makes it clear that the distinction drawn in the analogy is his own refinement, and that "vicious emulation" was, at that time, being used to signify "false wit." Demetrius (239) says that the vice existed both in the pretentiously swollen style and in the "dry" or "arid" style; Donatus (*Life of Virgil* 44), the very late commentator on Virgil, reports that in the early days of Augustus it was argued that the vice could manifest itself also in common words, where it was hard to detect. Whatever its popularity as a term, by the time of Hermogenes (second century A.D.) the word has not only lost its sting, but even has become a legitimate rhetorical device: see Hermogenes, *On Invention* 4.179 (pp. 202 ff. Rabe), where he finds examples even in Homer! This late adaptation of the word as a neutral technical term is perhaps a piece of evidence to support an early date for Longinus. A commentator on Hermogenes (Walz VIII.625) actually classifies the vice as a "rhetorical figure."

**Theodorus:** the reference is probably to Theodorus of Gadara, a tutor of Tiberius. If Longinus did have Theodorus of Gadara in mind, and not some other Theodorus of whom we know nothing, the identification is crucial for helping to date the work. On Theodorus and the dating of Longinus see *Dating.*

**parenthyrson:** transliterated from the Greek; the word literally means "going beyond a thyrsus," that is, one of the

which signifies either an emotion put in at just the wrong moment, at the very moment when there ought to be no emotion, or an immoderate emotion where there ought to be measured emotion. Some writers, you see, are often carried away, as if they were drunk, into displays of emotions that have nothing to do with their subject and are merely collegiate exhibitions; they are likely to perform in a fashion disfiguring to themselves and to display ecstasies before an audience which shares neither their feelings nor their ecstasies. We shall take up emotion, though, in another place.

implements associated with Dionysiac revels. The lexicons cite only this passage; the word was apparently coined by Theodorus.

**disfiguring:** the root of the word is "figure," the regular rhetorical term used for an inversion of normal patterns of speech (see ch. 16, n. on **figures**). Longinus is probably punning on this sense, both here and in 43.6.

**ecstatic . . . who are not:** in Greek there is a jingly word-play not duplicable in English: the words for "ecstatic" and "those who are not ecstatic" are forms of the verb, differing only by one letter. As usual, Longinus is exemplifying the literary device under analysis in the analysis itself. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in his book *On Composition* (14), discusses the sounds of the Greek alphabet and their place in literature.

## Chapter 4

# False Wit

BUT Timaeus is full of that other fault we have spoken of—I mean "false wit." He is a man sufficient in other respects, though, and sometimes not barren in greatness in speeches and writings; he is a polymath and is intent on perceiving. Yet he is out to prove the mistakes of others while unconscious of his own, and from his "erotic" passion for always exciting strange conceptions, he often falls into the most adolescent kind of humor. 2. But I shall set down only one or two citations from this fellow, since Caecilius has indeed taken up most of them first. In praising Alexander the Great, he says:

> He took over the whole of Asia in fewer years than it took Isocrates to write his "panegyric" speech about the war against the Persians.

**Timaeus:** a Sicilian historian of the third century B.C., noted for his carping manner. He was violently and lengthily attacked by Polybius (12).

**that other fault:** because of the lacuna, editors debate what the phrase "that other fault" refers to: Russell (p. 7 of his Introduction, n. 1) discusses the problem and gives references to contemporary discussions. Thus far Longinus has taken up the paratragic ("beyond the tragic"), the turgid, undergraduate wit, and *parenthyrson* (see ch. 3); he has said that undergraduate wit, if carried too far, degenerates into "false wit"—our candidate for "that other fault"—(see ch. 3, n. on **false wit**), but he did not discuss false wit at any length in ch. 3. In ch. 4, he returns to the topic, which he had interrupted for his discussion of *parenthyrson.*

Turgidity and undergraduate wit are extremes of "swelling," but they are not exclusively excess and deficiency, for the deficiency of "swelling" has several forms. Two of these are undergraduate wit and *parenthyrson;* but undergraduate wit is a species of a larger genus, false wit. Since the word for "undergraduate wit" signifies a youth, and since Timaeus—Longinus' first example of false wit—is markedly called a "man," it would appear that false wit is adult undergraduate wit. See J. A. Coulter, "PERI YPSOYS 3.3-4 and Aristotle's Theory of the Mean," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies,* 5 (1964): 197-213, where the problem is discussed at length.

**erotic passion:** for the strong word "erotic passion" see note on **loving of esteem,** ch. 35. An English phrase like "positive mania" would be more idiomatic. "Erotic passion" is the last of

Wonderful, this comparative judgment of the Macedonian with the sophist! O Timaeus! It is obvious, you see, that Spartan manhood was left

Longinus' group of terms for this youthful vice.

**"panegyric":** the most famous speech composed by Isocrates, the contemporary of Plato. At the end of the *Phaedrus,* Socrates says of the young Isocrates that he could, if he chose to, outstrip everyone in philosophy. But Isocrates elected to devote himself to politics and political science. Handicapped by a weak voice, he wrote rather than delivered speeches, something in part like a modern political columnist or editorial writer. Isocrates was also like the head of a "school of foreign affairs," for he founded a school and numbered among his pupils many of the future leaders of the ancient Hellenic world. Furthermore, he was probably the most important rhetorician who ever lived; his concern for style led to the perfection of a balanced periodic sentence, the style adopted by Cicero and handed through him to western Europe, where it shaped the logic of most of Europe's major languages. His *Panegyricus,* a speech in praise of Athens and Athenian culture, took ten years to compose. The author's sense of style was Tennysonian; he once composed a speech in which not one instance of hiatus occurred (no two successive words ended and began with vowels). Cf. R. P. Blackmur's essay "Lord Tennyson's Scissors," *Kenyon Review* 14 (1952): 1-20.

Russell remarks that Longinus uses the word "sophist" (which turns up in the next sentence as a way of referring to Isocrates) only in a bad sense. This is the only use of the word in the text, but the derivatives of "sophist" that appear are derogatory. When Longinus censures a device as "sophistical"—as he does in 23.4—he is referring to the style of Gorgias and the later rhetoricians, not to Isocrates. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Composition* 19, *ad fin.*) distinguishes sharply between Isocrates himself, whose graces concealed his monotony, and his followers, who lacked the master's grace.

**comparative judgment:** the Greek word technically means a critical judgment comparing two authors. Such a comparison may be produced either (a) by a bloc-technique in which first the qualities of A and then of B are successively listed or (b) by a series of balanced clauses which set off comparable qualities of each author against the other. Longinus performs a "comparative judgment" of the second kind between Demosthenes and Cicero in ch. 12.

For a splendid specimen of form (b) in English, see Johnson's comparison of Dryden and Pope, in the *Life of Pope,* part of which we quote here:

> The style of Dryden [in prose] is capricious and varied, that of Pope is cautious and uniform; Dryden obeys the motions of his own mind, Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller . . . If the flights of

far behind that of Isocrates, since the Spartans took over Messene in thirty years, while he organized his Panegyricus in ten. 3. How does he voice his epigram about the Athenians who were seized in Italy?

> Having been impious to Hermes and having mutilated his statues, they were for this reason punished, and not least on account of one man who was descended from

Dryden are therefore higher, Pope continues longer on the wind. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight.

The passage is worth studying both for the subtle variety of its sentence-structure, achieved within an almost formulaic design, and as an example of development (*amplificatio:* see ch. 12 of Longinus).

S. F. Bonner, in *The Literary Treatises of Dionysius of Halicarnassus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939), p. 9, suggests that Caecilius and Dionysius of Halicarnassus pioneered in the development of "comparative judgment." The fragments of Caecilius are too scant to allow any judgment; Dionysius is a very painstaking and judicious master of the bloc-technique of comparison. His extant specimens, however, do not reveal the sophisticated development which we find in Longinus. Perhaps the explanation lies in what Bonner calls the "polemical" quality of Longinus. Theon, in his *Progymnasmata* (Spengel 2.113-15), defines "comparative judgment" as a speech which establishes something as better or worse than something else: it may deal with persons (like Ajax vs. Odysseus) or with things (like wisdom vs. courage), but the method will be the same. In comparing persons, Theon recommends attention to things like birth, education, offspring, position, reputation, and physical condition.

**voice his epigram:** the noun of this verb is a Greek rhetorical term, defined, most simply, by the anonymous work *On Figures* (Spengel 3.116) as a device used at the end of a speech that is somewhat unexpected or paradoxical but not foreign to what was said before. Although the English word "epigram" is about as close as we can come, it suggests too much a sentence of wit to the exclusion of stylistic elegances or pure intellectual force. Theon (*Progymnasmata* [Spengel 2.91]) remarks that the device is not suitable for history or political speeches but for the stage and theatre. Hamlet's line "The time is out of joint" or Macbeth's "Damned be him who first cries 'hold, enough' " are examples of this kind of "epigram," for a gnomic notion is embodied in dramatic diction and context. Hermogenes' definition (*On Invention* 4.172 pp. 196 ff. in Rabe's ed.) is so generalized as to be supersubtle: any expression attached to but coming from outside the subject matter, *i.e.,* something said from the author's or character's point of view about something which is not strictly in accord with the truth, although it will have to be "true to nature."

> the offended god: Hermocrates, the son of Hermon.

So it makes me wonder, my most pleasing Terentianus, how it was that he did not write also of the tyrant Dionysius:

> Since, as we know, he was impious towards Zeus and Heracles, Dion and Heracleides for this reason took away his tyranny.

4. But why ought we speak of Timaeus when even those heroes—I am speaking of Xenophon and Plato (and they were from the Socratic gymnasium!)—sometimes forget themselves because of such trivial graces? Xenophon writes in his *The Constitution of the Lacedaemonians:*

> The Spartans were as silent as stones, their eyes as motionless as those statues, and you would take them to be as modestly virginal as the pupils of their eyes.

**son of Hermon:** the point of this epigram is a pure example of false wit, for it depends on an implied belief that the etymological similarity of the name "Hermes," the god, and "Hermocrates" are providential and not accidental; and, even worse, it justifies its theory of providentiality by the mere fact of etymological similarity. Even though the Greeks placed great importance on etymological significance, this specious epigram was too much for Longinus and for his contemporary Plutarch, who also censures it (*Lives, Nicias* 1).

**tyranny:** since Longinus cannot here employ his customary device of exemplifying the mannerism under analysis in the anaylsis itself, he resorts to direct parody. The force of his parody is somewhat vitiated by the fact that we know of no irreverence by Dionysius toward Zeus and Heracles.

**Xenophon and Plato:** the ancients thought very highly of Xenophon, far more than we do today, when he has even lost his place as required reading for second-year Greek—the Attic *Gallic Wars.* Milton conjoins them: "the divine Plato and his equal [probably contemporary] Xenophon" (*Apology . . . Smectymnuus, The Works of John Milton,* ed. Patterson *et al.* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1931], 3.305). Xenophon wrote excellent Greek on a variety of topics: he continued Thucydides' interrupted history and he is the author of the only extensive contemporary account of Socrates besides the dialogues of Plato. (See also ch. 8, n. on **On Xenophon.**)

**The Constitution of the Lacedaemonians:** *The Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* 3.5.

**. . .of their eyes:** the pun on the Greek word for "maiden" and "pupil of the eye" is not translatable. Xenophon goes

It was appropriate for an Amphicrates and not for a Xenophon to speak of the pupils of the eyes as modest virgins—as if, by Heracles, one could be persuaded that the pupils of all those Spartans' eyes were consistently virginal in their modesty, whereas, they say, the immodesty of anyone is expressed in nothing so much as in the eyes! Homer says of one who is headstrong, "Drunk, with the eyes of a dog." 5. Timaeus, though, like a thief holding onto some kind of poison, did not leave this piece of false Xenophontine wit alone. Speaking of Agathocles, how he kidnapped his cousin (who had been given to another man) from her wedding and went off, Timaeus says:

> Who would have done such a thing if he had had modest pupils in his eyes rather than whorish pupils?

6. And again, Plato, divine in other respects, when he wanted to say "writing tablets," declares:

> They shall place their writings in their temples on cypress memorials.

on to use as a synonym for "maiden" the word "virgin"; Timaeus extends the conceit even more by using the word "prostitute." Aristotle (fr. 1, Ross), says that lovers prefer, above all other parts of the body, to gaze at the eyes, since it is there that the sense of shame dwells. Melville's grotesque sexual pun at the end of his cetological chapter "The Cassock" (95) in *Moby Dick* will serve as an example in English of the same sort of pun as here occurs in Greek. Those looking this up, however, should read the whole chapter in order to understand the pun—and make sure that they have a correctly printed edition.

**Amphicrates:** see note in ch. 3.

**Homer says:** *Iliad* 1.225.

**cypress memorials:** Plato, *Laws* 5, 741C. The phrase does not—alas—seem excessively like false wit in English; perhaps a rough parallel might be the eighteenth century mannerism on mentioning low items in poeticized paraphrase, *e.g.*, "swart tribes" for "Brownies" (Collins, *Ode of Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland,* 23) or Cowper's picture of ashes on a fire-grate (*The Task* 4.292-3):

> The sooty films that play upon
> the bars, Pendulous.

Consider also Sir Richard Blackmore's lines, from his poem, *Job:*

> The finny tyrant of the spacious
> seas
> Shall send a scaly embassy for
> peace.

These are quoted in *The Stuffed Owl* (see ch. 3, n. on **false wit**). The device is still with us, *e.g.*, T. S. Eliot's "liquid siftings" on the excrement of birds

Another time, he writes:

> As for the walls, Megillus, I would agree with the Spartans in letting the walls lie down in the earth and sleep there, and not arouse them.

7. That Herodotean saying is not much different from this sort of writing, that beautiful women are a "pain in the eyes"—although, of course, there is some consolation in the fact that in Herodotus' account, barbarians were the ones saying this, and they were in a drunken state; but such words should not come even out of the mouths of barbarians—because of the pettiness of soul involved—for there is no beauty in performing ugly actions before the ages.

(*Sweeney Among the Nightingales*).

**. . . and not arouse them:** from Plato, *Laws* 6, 778D. Once again (see previous note), the vice does not seem conspicuous in English, to which personification and metaphor come so easily as to pass almost unnoticed. Perhaps this passage from Young's *Night Thoughts* (1.122-23) will illustrate the kind of vice as we find it in English:

> This is the bud of being, the dim dawn,
> The twilight of our day, the vestibule.

Or this passage from Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent* (ch. 8):

> And so, many an unsuspected, seemingly honest man, with the old lust in his soul, would steal out by night with his machete and perhaps a pistol, to put his fingers in the pie of darkness.

**a pain in the eyes:** Herodotus 5.18. Nowadays we would thoroughly enjoy the wit and realism of Herodotus' account; but Longinus' sensitivity to decorum often resembles that of the eighteenth century. Addison, in *Spectator* 160, reproaches both the Old and New Testaments, and Homer, for falling below "the nicety and correctness of the moderns": he lists examples of such indecorous images: "Solomon resembles the nose of his beloved to the tower of Lebanon . . . the coming of a thief in the night is a similitude of the same kind . . . . Homer illustrates one of his heroes encompassed with the enemy by an ass in a field of corn that has his sides belabored by all the boys in the village." And Pope found this comparison so objectionable that he translated the word "ass" as "the slow beast with heavy strength indu'd" and describes the many clubs with which the boys beat the ass as a "wooden tempest." In a lengthy note, he appeals to Boileau and Longinus as authorities for not translating mean and low words. When, in Book 9, Phoenix says that the baby Achilles used to vomit on the old man's shoulder, Pope prettifies the word and, in a note, remarks: "I wish I had the authority to say these verses were foisted into the text." Cf. Jules Brody, *Boileau and Longinus* (New York: Columbia University Press,

1958) and W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley, *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1954) esp. chs. 1-2.

## Chapter 5

# Novelty

SURELY all of these impressive qualities in speeches and writings grow naturally because of one cause—the concern for novelty, for which most men nowadays are in a corybantic frenzy indeed. You see, what is vicious in us loves to come into being from almost the very same sources as what is good. Thus, finely structured sentences, sublimities, and pleasing

**the concern for novelty:** Hume remarks (Essay XX, *Of Simplicity and Refinement in Writing*):

> The endeavor to please by novelty leads men wide of simplicity and nature, and fills their writings with affectation and conceit.

See ch. 13, n. on **mimesis and emulation.** In our own day, starting with Joyce (ca. World War I) and continuing until now (the 1980's), we have seen first language itself made the subject of radical experimentation and then genre and logic, *i.e.*, contemporary experiments in tychistic and aleatic art—for example, the movies of the Italian director Fellini or the novel which was published unbound, so that the reader may shuffle the pages around at random and arrive at his own personal artistic sequence. See Monroe C. Beardsley, "Order and Disorder in Art," in *The Concept of Order*, ed. Paul Kuntz (published for Grinnell College by the University of Washington Press: Seattle, 1968), pp. 191-218.

**corybantic frenzy:** the corybants were priests of Cybele and are often used as a type of either orgiastic religion or entranced and hyper-ecstatic moments in the individual's psychic life. Socrates speaks of the effect of philosophy on him at the end of the *Crito:*

> I seem to hear these things [the words of the Law] just as those who are corybants seem to hear the flutes, and this echo of its [the Law's] speeches hums in me and makes me unable to hear others.

Longinus is here using the phrase "corybantic frenzy" as a synonym for his frequent Dionysiac images. See E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), esp. pp. 77 ff., for a discussion of the phenomenon and references.

**structured sentences:** from the Greek word we derive our word "hermeneutics," the science of interpretation or exegesis. Often used loosely in Greek, its stricter rhetorical meaning appears in Demetrius, in the opening paragraph of his book *On the Structure of Sentences.* Demetrius says that, as poetry is classified by meters, so prose is classified and divided by the so-called cola or clauses. Here the word means something very close to our "sentence-structure," though with a rhetorical as well as a grammatical overtone.

**pleasing touches:** a technical term (lit-

touches contribute to correctness; but just as with a lucky result, these very same things also contribute to their opposites. Something of the same is true for variation, hyperbole, and the use of the plural number; but I shall demonstrate later the dangers of these. For just this reason it is now necessary to discuss how one may escape the vices which are mingled in with the sublime.

erally, "pleasures"), which Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in his book *On Composition* (11), discusses at length. He brackets pleasing touches with "fine phrasing"; both deal with melody, rhythm, and variation. Under "pleasing touches" come specifically a summer-like quality of loveliness, grace, euphony, sweetness, and persuasiveness. Each of these is then taken up.

**variation:** the term is defined by Tiberius (*On Figures:* Spengel 3.76) as a change not only of case but also of words; by Zonaeus (*On Figures:* Spengel 3.168) as a "different" presentation of a concept; of course, if one changes the words, one generally changes the idea, at least to some degree. Variation is taken up again briefly in ch. 23.

**hyperbole:** Apsinus, in his *Art of Rhetoric* (Spengel 1.405), says that hyperboles contribute to emotion. Tryphon, in his book *On Tropes* (Spengel 3.198), says, "a hyperbole is a phrasing which steps beyond the truth for the sake of development (*i.e., amplificatio*) or of belittlement. Other rhetoricians follow Aristotle, who observes (*Rhetoric* 1413a22) that a metaphor may conceal a hyperbole, for they classify it as a kind of similarity. Hyperbole is discussed at length in ch. 38.

**plural number:** discussed at length in chs. 23 and 24. Grube renders the sense neatly in his phrase "the poetic plural."

## Chapter 6

# Critical Decision

AND it is possible, my friend, if among our first requirements we have a kind of pure knowledge and critical decision of what sublimity in truth is. It is surely difficult; decision about speeches and writings is the final

**pure knowledge and critical decision:** On the assumption that knowledge is free from fault, Longinus can call it "pure," the same epithet used to describe the style of Hyperides (33.1). There is a Stoic definition of "knowledge" (quoted almost verbatim by Philo [*On the Preliminary Studies* 144 ff.]): "an apprehension that is safe and sure, not to be faulted by *logos*" (*Fragments*, ed. von Arnim, 1.73, 2.93 ff.). For the difference between knowledge and "technique," see ch. 2, n. on **technique.**

Esthetic theory is not metaphysical knowledge, and so Longinus here qualifies his sentence with "a kind of." Still, the claim made here is—from the point of view expressed by contemporary "cultural relativists"—extreme: a) there is such a thing as "true sublimity"; b) we can reach a kind of "scientific" knowledge of it; c) the method for doing so is "critical decision." Just what the details of the method are Longinus will consider at length, starting in ch. 8.

From the Greek word here translated as "decision" we derive our words "critic" and "criticism." Criticism as a separate literary activity arose late in antiquity, as it did also in English culture; the sequence seems to be: 1) the work of art and the artists; 2) the grammarians or philologians (in the more pedantic sense of that much maligned word); 3) the literary critics, who see themselves as concerned not only with exegesis of the words and prosody but also with the whole conceptual and philosophic context of the work of art. The distinction in (3) was made in antiquity: for the references see Russell's note *ad loc.*

There does not seem to have been a cult of criticism itself as an art form in antiquity: Longinus, though, would exemplify such criticism. In English culture, the treatment of criticism as a separate genre began with Pater and Wilde. For an early English statement of the job of the "grammarian" (*i.e.*, critic), see Elyot's *The Book Named the Governor,* where Elyot, following Quintilian Bk. I, esp. 8.13-21, says:

> I name him a grammarian, by the authority of Quintilian, that speaking . . . elegantly, can expound good authors, expressing the invention and disposition of the matter, the style or form of excellence, explicating the figures as well of sentences as words, leaving nothing, person or place named by the author, undeclared or hid from his scholars (I.15).

Elyot corresponds to stage (2) listed above. Sidney's *Defence of Poesie,* with its exalted justification of poetry itself and its brief analytic comments on the various genres, raises our expectation of

what criticism might become; but Sidney's attempt to reconcile neo-classical rules and divine inspiration is complicated by his mixing of Hellenic and Hebraic divine powers: either we have to grant him that the Christian God inspired Homer no less than Dante or question his theology, and either way the problems raised are at least as great as those solved. Longinus, with the more fluid theology of paganism, avoided this difficulty.

Modern criticism may be said to begin with Dryden, who, in the preface to his opera *The State of Innocence,* based on *Paradise Lost,* described it thus:

> Criticism, as it was first instituted by Aristotle, was meant a standard of judging well; the chiefest part of which is to observe those excellencies which should delight a reasonable reader.

It was thus that criticism developed in the eighteenth century: what it was like in the judgment of a non-professional can be seen in the summary given by Gibbon (see ch. 9, introductory note). In neo-classical criticism, even after it was infused with Longinian principles, the practice—especially in Pope and Johnson—was usually better than the theory.

In the critical writings of Coleridge, we can see the Romantic attempt to adopt Longinus' principle of intense emotion as the central and organic element of art; Coleridge claims (*Biographia Literaria,* ch. 7) that he has invented the word "intensify" (for a discussion of the neo-classic and Romantic views, see M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1953]). With Matthew Arnold, English criticism verges on what we call "cultural history"; Arnold said that literature was a "criticism of life" (in "Joubert," *Lectures and Essays in Criticism,* ed. R. H. Super [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962, p. 209]), a metaphor which produces its striking effect by inverting the terms: where, in Elizabethan times, art was to hold the mirror up to nature (*Hamlet* 3.2), and where criticism was applied to art, now art becomes the criticism of that which engendered it and of which it is the reflection. Arnold wrote, "Literary criticism's most important function is to try books as to the influence which they are calculated to have upon the general culture of single nations or of the world at large" ("The Bishop and the Philosopher," *Lectures and Essays in Criticism,* p. 41).

The writings of T. S. Eliot and Robert Graves mark the beginnings of what is called "New Criticism"; today, offshoot movements dispute about terminology, and methodology proliferates: Helen Gardner's book *The Business of Criticism* contains a summary of the modern movements from the point of view of a modern "historical" critic. Her definition embraces the notions of Longinus, Quintilian, Dryden, and Arnold:

> The primary critical act is a judgement, the decision that a certain piece of writing has significance and value. It asserts a hold in some way upon my intellect, which entertains the propositions which it makes. It appeals through my senses and imagination to my capacity to recognize order and harmony and to be delighted by them. It appeals to my experience as a human being, to my conscience and moral life.

result of much experiment. But no, in fact—to say something by way of pronouncement—it is not beyond our capacity to make a diagnosis of these matters from what follows in this essay.

**the result of much experiment:** the key word is "experiment," though it is universally translated "experience." The Greeks, however, carefully distinguished between "experiment (*peira*)"—an active testing—and "experience (*empeiria*)"—acquaintance with. Part of the difficulty arises because English "experience" can cover both. Experimentation was the concern of the serious student, like Terentianus. The word "experience" indicates what comes to men from the normal and rather casual activities of life. Thus Dio Cassius (8.36.14) says of a speaker that he spoke out of his inborn sense and his "experience of old age," a context in which "experimentation" could not, of course, be used. The late rhetoricians used Aristotelian distinctions of knowledge, technique, and experience in order to defend rhetoric as a technique. Troilus the Sophist, for example (Rabe, pp. 44-45), leaning heavily on Aristotle (*Metaphysics* 981a5 ff.), says that experience is a rubbing or contact that enables us to observe how things work in a non-theoretical and non-systematic way.

"Experiment," however, is an attempt or trial, *i.e.*, a deliberate testing. Hence, at the end of ch. 1, Longinus says that Terentianus could make many of the points from his own experimenting, that is, from his deliberate attempts to understand the whole by means of testing each of the parts systematically. John Doxopatres, a very late commentator on Apthonius (Rabe, p. 111), says that experiment is a form of understanding, by means of parts. The context implies systematic analysis and hence experiment, not merely experience. Longinus himself conjoins "pure knowledge" and "critical decision" in this chapter as preliminaries to judgment.

When Longinus says that discriminating judgment is the creation of long experiment, the word "experiment" signifies systematic and deliberate understanding of this kind. In Aristotelian terms, a man who had *experience* of literature could tell what was good but not why; a man who had engaged in *experimentation* would be on the way to telling why.

**but no, in fact:** a complex mixture of tones. If critical judgment comes only with much experiment, after years of reading and re-reading, to see whether a book "holds up" (as we say), then of what value is a critical essay? Longinus, with his usual witty awareness of himself, sees the point, and at once defends his "speech" on the sublime. To do so he uses the musing negative asservation, "But no, in fact," which in Greek shows the speaker to be aware that his previous statement is in need of some radical—though not destructive—qualification.

**diagnosis:** what Longinus offers to teach is "diagnosis," an English word simply transliterated from the Greek. As usual, Longinus exploits the nuances of his diction. By means of critical decision, of judicious verification based on a diagnosis made in accordance with the principles which Longinus is about to lay down, a reader will be in a position to judge what is good and bad in speeches and writings.

## Chapter 7

# Effects of Sublimity of the Soul

ONE must understand, my dear friend, that, as in the common life of mankind, nothing is great which it is great to despise—wealth, esteem, reputation, tyranny, and as many other external qualities as we might find in a tragic hero; nor will these things appear very good to a man of sense since to consider oneself superior to these is itself reckoned a good, and, of course, more than at those who actually do have them, men wonder at those who, though they are capable of having these things (wealth, esteem, etc.), look down on them through greatness of soul; in this way we

**One . . .:** another of Longinus' long sentences; it extends in Greek through all of paragraph one. See the note at the beginning of chapter 1 for the long periodic sentence. If some of Longinus' parenthetical interjections seem lengthy, let the reader remember the style of Henry James or the famous sentence in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables,* which runs to 8,923 words, punctuated by 93 commas, 51 semicolons, and 4 dashes.

**wealth . . . tyranny:** the list is conventional because it is true. Philo (*That the Worst is Wont to Attack the Better 122*) gives a similar list, which he concludes with an elaborate *et cetera:* "and as many other things as are sisters of these, over which the mass of men busies itself." In *Rewards and Punishments,* the list, which Philo defines as "external goods," is extended to include "victories over our enemies, triumph in wars, lasting peace and prosperity, and encomia, whether coming from fright or good will." Compare also Galen's list (*On the Diagnosis of the Emotions* 3.3): love of material possessions, love of ruling, love of esteem, love of reputation. Longinus' list is cumulative and climactic (see ch. 44), for one vice leads to the other, until at last we reach the tyrannical man. Plato analyzes tyranny and its misery both in the *Republic* (9.578C) and in the *Gorgias* (508C). The *Gorgias* especially—an analysis of the fallacy of rhetoric as too often practised in antiquity—exposes the pseudo-pleasures of absolute power; Socrates' overwhelming conclusion is that rhetoric has but one true function: to persuade oneself and one's friends to submit to just punishment.

**in a tragic hero:** the source of the idea is Aristotle's observation on the practice of tragedy, defined in the *Poetics* (1453a): the tragic figure must be a man selected from those who are great in the opinion of mankind and who have had the good luck to be prosperous.

**greatness of soul:** see Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (1124a13): "he will have a moderate attitude towards wealth

must also look into what appears lofty in sections of poems and speeches and writings, to see whether it has just an outer image of greatness, with a lot of random decoration, but which when looked into is found to be puffed up, the kind of thing which it is better to sense oneself superior to than to wonder at. 2. You see, by true sublimity our soul somehow is both lifted up and—taking on a kind of exultant resemblance—filled with delight and great glory, as if our soul itself had created what it just heard. 3. Whenever a man of sense, experienced in speeches and writings, hears something very often but does not have his soul uplifted, and whenever what he hears does not leave deep in his mind more to theorize on than what was actually said, if you look well into it, you will see that it falls into a state of withering underdevelopment and is not a true sublimity inasmuch as it is held in the mind only while it is heard. You see, what is really great has much about

and dynasty and all good luck ...." Such is the character of the man who is "great-souled." But Longinus' picture is not simply Aristotelian, for it has been colored by Stoic philosophy, with its renunciation of all emotional concern with things not in our control. This attitude of superiority culminates in the medieval *contemptus mundi.*

**sections of poems:** Longinus (chs. 35 and 36) argues that sublimity is not possible *throughout* a great work because it imitates nature, and nature is not equally grand everywhere. His use of a word meaning "section of a poem" appears to be intended to convey this point. Greek has no word meaning "section of a speech"; presumably we are intended to carry over the sense to the second part of the phrase, "speeches and writings."

**leave deep in his mind:** the phrase seems to echo the famous remark on Pericles made by Eupolis (fl. 430-410 B.C.—an Athenian writer of comedies): "he alone of the public speakers leaves his spur deep in the audience."

**underdevelopment:** the word seems to be unique in extant Greek literature (Roberts, p. 189). It is translated variously: "disesteem" (Roberts), "dwindles away" (Prickard), "sinks in his esteem (Fyfe), "fades and is forgotten" (Grube), "valueless" (Russell, who says it means "bathos"), "loses . . . effectiveness" (Dorsch). Galen uses the verbal form to indicate a mathematical disproportion (LSJ). The word occurs frequently in Longinus without the prefix (it is discussed at length in chs. 11 and 12) and means "development"; consequently we have translated the word here as "withering underdevelopment." Prickard has come closest in sense. Milton makes Christ reject all of Greek poetry on the ground of "underdevelopment" (*Paradise Regained* IV.341-45):

> In Fable, Hymn, or Song, so personating
> Thir Gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.
> Remove their *swelling* epithets thick laid
> As varnish on a Harlot's cheek, the rest,
> Thin sown with aught of profit or delight.

which to theorize and is difficult, or rather, beyond our capacity to withstand, and the memory of it is strong and hard to let go of. 4. On the whole, consider it a rule that those sublimities are fine and true to nature which are satisfying throughout all time and to all men. You see, whenever men of different behaviors, lives, emulations, ages, and speeches and writings all

**true to nature which . . . to all men:** one might expect the simple word "true" instead of "true to nature," for the distinction see ch. 3, n. on **true to nature.** Longinus does not here mean *all* men actually at any given time; as the passage taken as a whole shows, he means men in general and all men potentially, for the rules governing sublimity are capable of being learned at least for purposes of appreciation even if not for creation. The nature of man is something universal and constant for Longinus, as his splendid description in ch. 35 shows.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Composition* 25) enunciates the same theory of "the test of time"; he imagines someone objecting to his theory that Demosthenes, for example, paid careful attention to conjunctions of vowels and consonants, to time-beats, to meter, and so on, to whom he replies with these noble words:

> It is not surprising that after all a man who is held to deserve a greater reputation than any of his predecessors who were distinguished for eloquence was anxious, when composing eternal works and submitting himself to the scrutiny of all-testing time and envy, not to admit either subject or word at random, and to attend carefully to both the arrangement of ideas and beauty of words.

For the theory of "the ages" as an incentive, see Charles Segal, " Ὕψος and the Problem of Decline in the *De Sublimitate*," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 64(1959): esp. pp. 123-24.

The doctrine is current today in our abbreviated form, "the test of time"; Johnson's phrasing of it (*Preface to Shakespeare,* paragraphs 53 and 54) is a just imitation.

> To works, however, of which the excellence is not absolute and definite, but gradual and comparative; to works not raised upon principles demonstrative and scientific, but appealing wholly to observation and experience, no other test can be applied than length of duration and continuance of esteem. What mankind have long possessed they have often examined and compared, and if they persist to value the possession, it is because frequent comparisons have confirmed opinion in its favor . . . .
>
> The reverence due to writings that have long subsisted comes not from any credulous confidence in the superior wisdom of past ages, or gloomy persuasion of the degeneracy of mankind, but is the consequence of acknowledged and indubitable positions, that what has been known longest has been most considered, and what is most considered is best understood.

**ages:** the ages of a man's life, *e.g.*, youth, maturity, old age. These are the

have one and the same opinion about something, then the agreed upon opinion, arising out of a discordant group, takes on for the object of wonder an assuring strength which does not lend itself to debate.

three major divisions, analyzed and described by Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* (1389a ff.) Later thinkers, like Varro, make the division fivefold; we are most familiar with the sevenfold division of Jacques in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (2.7).

**out of a discordant group:** perhaps, in germ, the notion of a *discordia concors,* a harmony out of dissonance; Russell cites Dio Chrysostom (53.6) on Homer's popularity not only among those speaking the same language but also among many "barbarians." Dio refers to two groups of non-Greeks who read and admired Homer: 1) those who were bilingual, of whom Dio says that, if they knew nothing else in Greek literature, they knew Homer; 2) those who read Homer in translation, like the inhabitants of India.

## Chapter 8

# The Five Springs of Sublimity

BUT since there are, one may say, five kinds of springs most productive of sublimity of address (although capacity for speaking is a kind of common foundation for these five ideas, without which generally there is

**five kinds of springs:** in listing these five sources so numerically and baldly, Longinus is providing what some rhetoricians called a separate part of the oration: the *partitio* or *divisio*. Most editors take this five-fold division as "the plan of the book" as a whole, but it is really only an outline of the third section of the speech, the demonstration or proof; in Latin, the *argumentatio*. See Introduction.

**sublimity of address:** the phrase is one word in Greek; it is composed of the adjective "sublime" and the noun which means "marketplace," that center of economic, social, and civic life, wherein the free citizens met to trade, converse, debate, and argue. The word, in its various compounds, virtually always suggests a matter of civic discourse. Its use here at the beginning of ch. 8 reminds us of how much Longinus is concerned with political style, especially those "speeches and writings" which affect men's conception of their own nature and greatness. Longinus uses the word again in the opening sentence of ch. 14, where he argues that it is necessary for Terentianus and himself, as well as for men in general, to ask themselves how Homer, or Plato, or Demosthenes, or Thucydides, would have said what we may wish to say. His list of exemplars covers the genres of epic, philosophy, political oratory, and history. When he uses the word for the third and last time in *On the Sublime* (34.4), it signifies one of the great virtues of Demosthenes, the most civic and political of these exemplars. Although the Greek word does not appear to have acquired any special significance as a technical term in rhetoric, it was used easily as a general synonym for literary excellence and sublimity (*e.g.*, Philo, *That the Worse is Wont to Attack the Better* 79).

**capacity for speaking:** Longinus means what we call "natural ability," which technique is to develop and enhance. He discusses the relationship of nature and technique—a commonplace in antiquity—in ch. 2.

**ideas:** Longinus uses the word "idea" five times; Russell observes that the use here in ch. 8 is without "any technical sense, philosophical or rhetorical," and the observation holds true of all five uses. In the second century A.D., Hermogenes used the word in the title of his book *On Ideas*, in which he broke with the usual classification of styles into three kinds, together with their vicious counterparts.

The word in early Greek refers to the shape of a thing as distinct from such other properties as size or color. At least as early as Herodotus it was extended to

nothing)—first and most powerful is a solid thrust of conception, as we have defined in our pages on Xenophon; second is an intense and enthusiastic emotion (these first two are for the most part self-bred constituents of

signify "kind" or "sort": it is connected with the root-verb "to see," "to know," "to understand." Greek classified things according to their "look" (*species*)—as we tend to do—on the grounds that sight is the most important of the senses (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 980a23-28).

The word "idea" hovers between signifying "genus" and "species" (see Ast's *Lexicon Platonicum*) as well as the conception which the mind has of such things. In Hermogenes, the word means something like "modes": there are, he says, seven "ideas" or "modes" of style. His late commentator, Maximus Planudes (Walz V.439), offers the following definition of the term "idea": it is a "quality of *logos* which fits with both the underlying persons and facts in accordance with both conception and style . . . ."

Longinus belongs neither to the school which treated style according to the triple classification of high, middle, and low, nor to the sevenfold classification of Hermogenes.

**on Xenophon:** nothing survives of Longinus' work on Xenophon, who was much admired in antiquity. Xenophon's clear, graceful Greek style would not in itself make him appealing to Longinus, who is derogatory of this virtue if not accompanied by other virtues (see chs. 33 and 34); it is, Russell argues, Xenophon's "manly and honest temper" which appeals to him. We have no necessary reason to believe that Longinus found in Xenophon the quality which he here praises—all that he says is that he discussed the matter in his book(s) on Xenophon. The plural perhaps suggests a major work, and there are other *testimonia* to support the notion that Xenophon had the quality which Longinus specifies. Hermogenes, for example, in *On Ideas* (2.392) remarks that Xenophon has ideas which often attain greatness, but adds that he purifies and reduces them to simplicity by his style and diction. We may presume that Longinus, who is no less perceptive than Hermogenes, saw the point.

Xenophon led both an active and contemplative life: he was a soldier of fortune and a follower of Socrates; his works include history, first-hand accounts of military campaigns (he was elected a general by the Greek mercenaries in Persia), household management, political theory, cavalry techniques and tactics, philosophy. In all of them he displays his practical abilities, for even his theorizing is solidly applicable to life. It is this quality of having his feet planted firmly on the ground, even when dealing with the abstruseness of philosophy, that Longinus seems to have in mind. Such is the assessment which Xenophon makes of himself (*On Hunting* 13.1-6). He is something like Dryden as compared with Shakespeare.

**self-bred constituents:** the phrase is variously translated: "natural endowments" (Havell), "innate components" (Roberts), "native-born constituents" (Prickard), "innate dispositions" (Grube), "sources native to man"(Einarson), "natural sources" (Russell: in his note he offers the fine gloss "natural means of production," but admits that the interpretation is unusual), "innate

sublimity, while those now left come also from technique); third is a sort of molding of figures, both figures of conception and those of style; in addition

elements" (Dorsch). The adjective "self-bred, self-created" is regularly used in Greek of spring-fed rivers (LSJ); in Philo it is virtually a stock-epithet. Perhaps we are to see a continuation of the metaphor started in the word "spring," used at the beginning of the chapter.

**while those left come also from technique:** the division of natural and artificial is not a sharp and discrete one for Longinus; he concedes in the opening of the chapter that natural ability at speaking is the common foundation of all five categories. Such ability is presumably not subject to technique at all. Thereafter come the five categories, the first two of which are inborn but which technique can develop; the last three can be attained by technique *as well as* by nature. In ch. 2, Longinus took pains to argue that those who believed in the maxim "poets are born, not made" were wrong. Such critics are still with us—the kind of person who, on being shown an explication or analysis used by great artists, will say, "but he didn't have all that in mind; I mean, he was just a natural genius." One of Longinus' principal aims in the book is to show precisely how art and nature work together and in what degree. Compare also Spenser (*The Faerie Queene* II.xii.59):

> One would have thought (so cunningly the rude
> And scorned parts were mingled with the fine,)
> That Nature had for wantonnes ensude
> Art, and that Art at Nature did repine;
> So striving each th' other to undermine,
> Each did the others worke more beautify;
> So diff'ring both in willes agree in fine:
> So all agreed through sweet diversity
> This gardin to adorne with all variety.

**figures:** inspection of the ancient rhetorical handbooks reveals widely different attempts to define and distinguish "figure of speech" from "trope." Phoibammon, in his book *On Figures* (Spengel III.44), begins with a summary of previous definitions, continues with the legitimate objections which can be lodged against each, and concludes with a definition of his own: he quotes the definition given by Caecilius, which resembles that given by Longinus quite closely: a figure is a turning of thought or style toward what is not natural. Both Phoibammon and Cocondrius (Spengel III.230-1) agree that the "trope" affects an individual word, the "figure of speech" affects several words, that is, the "trope" is a matter of diction, the "figure" a matter of syntax. Such is the way that Dryden, for example, understood the distinction (Preface to *The State of Innocence*): speaking of "poetic license," he said, "if this licence be included in a single word, it admits to tropes, if in a sentence or proposition, of figures."

Demetrius (*On the Structure of Sentences* 263-271) lists the following kinds of figures, with examples: *praeteritio*, aposiopesis, *prosopopoeia*, repetition, anaphora (of which asyndeton and homoeoteleuton are subdivisions),

to these there is noble phrasing, the parts of which are the selection of words and the trope and "made up" elaboration of style; and the fifth spring

climax.

Addison, in *Tatler* 163, has a very amusing account of an interview with a young, and not very good, poet, in which he and the poet analyze the latest creation of the poet's in terms of rhetorical figures. In *Tatler* 114, Addison justly praises Milton's use of figures and "turns" in the great speech by Eve, "With thee conversing . . ." (*Paradise Lost* IV.639-55). A study of the two passages will reveal exactly how much figures can contribute to sublimity and emotion. Cf. John Illo on "The Rhetoric of Malcolm X" in *Columbia Forum* 9 (Spring, 1966): 5-12.

**conception:** "Roughly speaking, figures of speech [*i.e.,* style] are those which do not affect the substance of what is said and are destroyed by mere changes of grammar or word-order; such are anastrophe, asyndeton, homoeoptoton. Figures of thought [*i.e.,* conception], on the other hand, depend not on details of expression but on the way in which the thought is cast; rhetorical question and aposiopesis are examples of this class. The distinction is not at all a clear one: see Quntillian, 9.1.10 ff." A fine note by Russell, though the ancient critics did not always observe the distinction.

English examples of figures of style may be found easily in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* and in E. K.'s glosses thereon. For example:

> I love thilke lasse, (alas! why do I love?)
> And am forlorne, (alas! why am I lorne?)
>
> (January 61-2)

The glossator remarks, "A pretty epanorthosis in these two verses, and withal a paranomasia . . ." Changing the position of "alas" will not change the sense but will destroy the clever rhetoric. If, however, we look at Antony's speeches to the mob in *Julius Caesar* (III.ii), we shall find many examples of figures of conception. For example:

> But here's a parchment with the seal of Caesar—
> I found it in his closet—'tis his will.

Here the force of the parenthetical "I found it in his closet" is powerful, for it suggests an intimacy between Antony and Caesar that justifies his taking up the cause of the dead man. The force would be reduced but not altered by transposing the clause in the sentence.

**style:** the Greek word (*lexis*) is the fourth of Aristotle's six qualitative parts of tragedy (*Poetics* 1450b13): *lexis*, he says, is the interpretation through wording and has the same power in both poetry and prose. The parts of *lexis* are listed in *Poetics* 1456b20 ff.: element, syllable, connective, noun, verb, article, case, and *logos*. In *Rhetoric* 1403b6 ff., we find an extended discussion of *lexis* as one of the three principal parts that make up the business of speaking: thought, in the form of providing proofs; *lexis*; and the arranging of the parts of speech as a whole, *e.g.,* introduction, peroration, etc. The first, thought, involves the facts; the second, *lexis*, involves expressing the facts in sentences constructed for clarity and appropriateness to the subject-matter (1404b1-4). Longinus follows the same distinction, although he substitutes "conception" for "thought";

the root of both terms is the same. Yet he narrows the significance, for he restricts it to the moulding of figures; the choice of words (diction) is a separate entry.

**selection of words and the trope and "made up" elaboration of style:** here, in ch. 8, Longinus lists two subdivisions of "phrasing": 1) the selection of words; 2a) the trope; 2b) a "made up" elaboration of style. Thus, in good writing, sometimes the mere choice of the right word (*le mot juste*) will be enough. Examples in English are common (the italicized words are the perfect ones):

1. And when he rood, men mighte his bridel heere
   *Ginglen* in a whistling wind . . .
   Chaucer, *General Prologue* 169-70
2. Behold how goodly my faire love does ly
   In *proud* humility . . .
   Spenser, *Epithalamion* 305-06
3. Of man's first disobedience and the fruit
   Of that forbidden tree, whose *mortal* taste
   Brought death into the world and all our woe . . .
   Milton, *Paradise Lost* I.1-3
4. that this government *of* the people, *by* the people, and *for* the people shall not perish . . .
   Lincoln, *Gettysburg Address*
5. Never before in the history of the world was *so* much owed by *so* many to *so* few. Churchill

The next rhetorical effect is produced by "trope," that is, the right words consist (so to speak) of the wrong word:

1. O Rose, thou art *sick*!
   Blake, *The Sick Rose*
2. O listen! for the Vale *profound*
   Is overflowing with the sound.
   Wordsworth, *The Solitary Reaper*
3. Suddenly I saw the cold and *rock-delighting* heaven . . .
   Yeats, *The Cold Heaven*
4. And sang within the bloody wood
   When Agamemnon cried aloud,
   And let their *liquid siftings* fall
   To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud.
   Eliot, *Sweeney Among the Nightingales*

And the last device is the "made up" elaboration of style:

1. *Before Adam was, I am* is the saying of Christ, yet is it true in some sense if I say it of myself, for I was not only before myself but Adam, that is, in the Idea of God, the decree of the Synod held from all Eternity. And in this sense, I say, the world was before the Creation, and at an end before it had a beginning, and there was I dead before I was alive; though my grave be England, my dying place was Paradise, and Eve miscarried of me before she conceived of Cain.
   Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici* I.59
2. Ye who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope; who expect that age will perform the promises of youth, and that the deficiencies of the present day will be supplied by the morrow; attend to the history of Rasselas prince of Abyssinia.
   Johnson, *Rasselas*, ch. 1
3. In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river to the mountains. In the bed of the river there were pebbles and boulders, dry and white in the sun, and the water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels . . . . The trunks of the trees were too dusty and the leaves fell off early that year and we saw the troops marching along the road and

and the trope and "made up" elaboration of style; and the fifth spring responsible for greatness, which includes all before it, is the way things are put together in worth and loftiness—come, let us look to see for ourselves what is included in each of these, first saying only this, that of these five there are some which Caecilius left aside, as he left out emotion. 2. But if both of these, sublimity and emotion, actually were in his opinion one and were fundamentally together everywhere and grew together by nature, then he is thoroughly mistaken. You see, some emotions, standing far from sublimity, are actually found to be low, such as lamentation, pain, fright; and furthermore, there are many sublime passages without emotion, such as (in addition to tens of thousands of others) those exceedingly bold lines of the poet [*i.e.*, Homer] about the Aloadae:

> They both were eager to set Ossa on Olympus, on Ossa Pelion, shaker of woods, so that heaven might be passable to them.

> the dust rising and leaves, stirred by the breeze, falling and the soldiers marching and afterward the road bare and white except for the leaves.
>
> Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*, ch. 1

**the way things are put together:** the Greek word is *synthesis*, which has been domesticated in English: it means literally "setting together" so as to form a whole. Longinus takes it up more fully in ch. 29. Our English word "composition," especially as applied to music, will sometimes convey the idea, for it, too, covers phrasing, rhythm, euphony.

**lamentation, pain, fright:** Longinus is not arguing that these emotions are inherently low, but only when they are found apart from sublimity, as they tend to be. In 9.12-13, he distinguishes between the superior sublimity of the emotional experiences which make up the *Iliad* and the lesser greatness of the *Odyssey*, with its "wailings and lamentations" for the dead heroes. So, too, Hyperides is given the faintly damning praise of having a nature most suited for evoking a sense of lamentation (34.2). The picture of Xerxes at the end of Aeschylus' *Persians* presents us with all three emotions, and only the magnificence of Aeschylus' language and dramaturgy prevent us from seeing how low and undignified they are. Melodrama and "soap operas" provide many modern examples of this point.

**the Aloadae:** *Odyssey* 11.315-17. These sons of Poseidon, Otus and Ephialtes, were brought up by the giant Aloeus and are here given a patronymic taken from his name. Their attempt to reach heaven and attack Zeus by piling Mount Pelion on Mount Ossa is still used as a symbol for impiety. Longinus frequently refers to Homer simply as "the poet," since he is in a class by himself. Samuel Johnson implies as much in the closing sentence in his life of Milton: "his work is not the greatest of heroick poems, only because it is not the first."

**and now they would have ended it:** a strikingly simple line. Great effects can

And there is the still greater line after these:

> And now they would have ended it.

3. For public speakers, of course, though encomia, ceremonial speeches, and "show" speeches have in all parts boldness and the sublime, for the most part they lack emotion; as a result of which public speakers who are full of emotion are least apt to write encomia, while those who do write encomia are least emotional. 4. Again, if Caecilius wholly considered it a rule that emotion never ended up in sublimity and, on this account, did not consider it worthy of mention, he was very much misled. You see, I would confidently lay it down as a definition that nothing is so great in address as noble emotion—there in the place where it must be—breathing out enthusiastically as by a kind of madness and spirit which, as it were, made the speeches and writings oracularly Apollonian.

be achieved by such means, as Longinus knew when he quoted a verse from the opening of Genesis (9.9 in Longinus); but of course the device can fall flat just as much as turgidity and bombast can. For example, this passage from Wordsworth (*Address to My Infant Daughter*):

> —Hast thou survived—
> Mild offspring of infirm humanity,
> Meek infant! among all forlornest things
> The most forlorn—one life of that bright star,
> The second glory of the Heavens!—
> *Thou hast.*

Or compare Spenser's use of "there is" in *The Fairie Queen* II.8, stanza 1, line 4.

**encomia, ceremonial speeches, and "show" speeches:** Longinus does not use the standard divisions of speech-making as they are given by Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* (1358b7): the advisory (*i.e.*, political), the forensic or legal (speeches in law-courts), the epideictic (*i.e.*, "show speeches" designed to display or "show off" the skill of the speaker, like the traditional speeches on the Fourth of July or Guy Fawkes Day). In this passage Longinus groups both the Aristotelian genus (epideictic) and one of its subdivisions (encomium); he adds as co-equal a class not specifically noted by Aristotle, the speech on a ceremonial occasion. Encomia in Aristotle belong to that class of epideictic oratory that praise or blame (*Rhetoric* 1367b28 ff.). Of encomia, one kind praises greatness of excellence, the other praises greatness of works or deeds.

**enthusiastically:** Longinus here uses "enthusiastic" in a favorable sense; see ch. 3, n. on **enthusiasm.**

**oracularly Apollonian:** Apollo is the source of good enthusiasm for Longinus, Dionysus for bad. Longinus here imitates the quality he is defining, for he uses a rare and poetic word (the word we have translated "oracularly Apollonian") to suggest his own heightened sensitivity. So bold is the word that he qualifies it with "as it were."

## Chapter 9

# Nobility of Nature: Homer

BUT in fact the first of these has the most powerful part, and I mean nobility of nature; all the same, we must, even here—even if it is something one is born with and does not acquire—rear up our souls as much as we can to greatness and make them, as it were, pregnant over and over again with a noble inspiration. 2. In what way, you will ask. I have written in another place something like this: sublimity is the resonance of

Here begins the third part of Longinus' "speech" (see Introduction), the "demonstration" or "proof."

This chapter has always been a favorite with readers, partly because of its luminous acumen, partly because of its splendid encomium of Homer, partly because it preserves one of the few extensive fragments of Sappho, partly because of its noble phrasing. Gibbon's famous comment emphasizes the unique ability of Longinus to adapt his own style to the nature of his particular subject:

> The ninth chapter is one of the finest monuments of antiquity. Till now I was acquainted only with two ways of criticizing a beautiful passage: the one to show by an exact anatomy of it the distinct beauties of it and whence they sprung; the other, an idle exclamation or general encomium which leaves nothing behind it. Longinus has shown me that there is a third. He tells me his own feelings upon reading it, and tells me with such energy that he communicates them. I almost doubt which is more sublime, Homer's Battle of the Gods or Longinus' apostrophe to Terentianus upon it.
>
> *Journal* (September 3, 1762)

In 1.1, Longinus had said that Caecilius failed to show us the methods for strengthening our natures toward some progress in greatness. Here, in ch. 9, he says that even if greatness be a gift rather than an acquisition, still we can "rear up" our souls to a position where we "stand alongside it." Technique and method, then, are ways of achieving a vertical progress parallel to, even if not identical with, natural sublimity. Since human sublimity is achieved best through *logos* (ch. 39), and since rhetoric is a *logos* about *logos*, man's greatness and sublimity will always comprise an inseparable blend of nature and technique; but the parts can be distinguished by technique (ch. 2). On "rearing up" this "second nature," see ch. 44, n. on **abilities we have in us.**

**resonance:** generally translated as "echo" (Pearce, Roberts, Grube, Russell, Dorsch); Prickard has "the note which rings" and Fyfe has "true ring." The Greek verb from which it comes means to "sound, ring, peal" (LSJ); it is used of metal, grasshoppers, the tinkle

greatness of mind. As a result, sometimes a bare thought, by itself, without a voice, is wonderful because of its nobility of mind, as the silence of Ajax in the Nekuia is great and more sublime than any speech. 3. Now first it is entirely necessary to set down beforehand how it is that the true public speaker ought to have a sensibility neither low nor ignoble. You see, those whose sense of things and behavior in the whole of life are petty and appropriate to a slave are nót the sort who would bring out something wonderful and worthy of the ages; but the speeches and writings of those whose thoughts are grave are, as is likely, greatest. 4. And in this way what is beyond nature falls to those who most presume to have this sensibility, as Alexander the Great did when he said to Parmenio: "I would have been content."

*[a lacuna of 6 leaves (12 pages or about 12%) occurs here]*

. . . the distance from earth to heaven. And one might say this to be the measure no more of Strife than of Homer. 5. How unlike Homer is that

one gets in one's ears. The verb "resound" is perhaps the most accurate and general translation.

**silence of Ajax:** the scholiast on Homer (*Odyssey* 11.536) remarks that Ajax's silence is clearly better than the speeches of the tragedians. Aeschylus, who imitated Homer carefully, employed the device frequently: the most notable example occurs in the protracted silence of Cassandra in the *Agamemnon*. Had Longinus been minded to, as Greek critics universally were not, he could have cited, as a Latin example, Virgil's famous imitation, in the meeting of Dido and Aeneas (*Aeneid* 6.440-76). Addison wittily prides himself (*Tatler* 133) on being the first to discover the resemblance of the two scenes. *Tatler* 133 deals with the effect which silent moments and scenes in literature exert as "more significant and sublime than the most noble and expressive eloquence, and . . . on many occasions the indication of a great mind." English tragedians, Addison says, are defective in using the device.

On Greek critical silence with respect to Roman literature, see G.M.A. Grube, *A Greek Critic: Demetrius on Style* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), p. 15. Grube's introduction contains an excellent summary of Greek critical theory.

**I would . . . content:** the full story is told in Arrian's *Alexander* (2.25.2): Parmenio was one of Alexander's generals; after one of the high points of his master's campaigning he said that if he were Alexander, he would stop fighting; Alexander replied that he would, too, if he were Parmenio. Russell quotes an amusing parallel from Sterne's *Tristam Shandy* (ch. XXXIX), which mentions the name Longinus.

**Strife:** the description of the goddess Strife appears in the *Iliad* (4.440 ff.):

Hesiodic saying about Sorrow, if, of course, *The Shield* is to be attributed to Hesiod:

> out from nostrils mucus flowing.

He has made the picture not powerful, but hateful. But how does Homer magnify the daemonic:

> As far as a man may see with his eyes into the mist,
> As he sits on a hill-top gazing down on a wine-dark ocean,
>
> At first she rears her crest a little bit, but then
> She fixes her head in heaven and steps on the earth.

**Hesiod:** Longinus' doubt about the authenticity of this work (*The Shield of Heracles*) is shared by many, but the question is still disputed. The verse quoted is line 267. The poem is a kind of miniature epic, technically called a "lay"; there is a brief but good description and criticism of the poem in Sir Maurice Bowra's *Landmarks in Greek Literature* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1966), pp. 65-66. Comparisons of Homer and Hesiod are inevitable. There survives an ancient poem entitled *The Contest of Homer and Hesiod*, in which the two poets compete by reciting favorite passages; although Hesiod loses every time, he is awarded the prize at the end because he celebrates farming and peace whereas Homer celebrates war.

**mucus flowing:** Longinus goes on to call this image "hateful" rather than "frightening"; the distinction is itself nicely distinguished from that made in 3.1, where the images were described as what we "sense below ourselves" rather than "frightening."

William Smith, in his eighteenth century translation, observes that Milton handles a loathesome scene—the lazar-house in *Paradise Lost* XI.479 ff.—with "judiciousness":

> A Lazar-house it seem'd, wherein were laid
> Numbers of all diseas'd, all maladies
> Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
> Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
> Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
> Intestine stone and ulcer, colic pangs,
> Daemoniac frenzy, moping melancholy,
> And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,
> Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,
> Dropsies, and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.

The problem here is like that of low diction: see ch. 43.

**daemonic:** an extremely hard word to translate; technically a *daemon* is a kind of divinity intermediate between gods

Just so far leaped out the divine high-echoing horses.

He measures the leap of the steeds by a cosmic distance. Now who would not be likely, because of this hyperbolic greatness, to exclaim that if the horses of the gods should leap twice like that they would no longer find in the cosmos a place to land? 6. And beyond nature too are the things he has imagined about the Battle of the Gods:

> Heaven, mighty Olympus, trumpeted; unseen Hades,
> Lord of the dead souls underneath, trembled in horror,
> Trembled upon the throne and screamed, lest then
> Earthshaker Poseidon break earth open,
> His home be seen by mortals and immortals,
> Dire, mould'ring, hated in heaven.

Do you see, fellow pupil, how the earth is split open from its profound depths, Tartarus itself laid naked, the whole cosmos appear to overturn and break up—everything at once—heaven and Hades, the mortal and the immortal—how everything at once shares together in the war and in the danger of the fighting? 7. But though these are frightening, if one were not to take them as allegory, they are otherwise impious and unobservant of what is appropriate. In my opinion, you see, Homer in representing the wounds, factions, revenges, tears, bonds, and all-confused emotions of the

and man. In antiquity such a being could be either good or bad; our word "demon," derived from it, is only bad. The Homeric passage is from *Iliad* 5.770-72.

**Battle of the Gods:** the quotation is conflated from *Iliad* 20.61-65, 21.338 and 750. In general, Longinus seems to quote from memory; to have conflated lines so far apart suggests how well the ancients were able to keep in mind what they read. Demetrius (83) objects to the opening line of the quotation: the metaphor, he says, is appropriate to pettiness rather than to greatness, for the whole heaven is too big to be compared to one trumpet.

**you see:** Longinus' sentence imitates the split which he is describing; even the repeated use of "at once"—logically unnecessary—contributes to the sense of excitement.

**allegory:** Allegorical interpretation of Homer is of very early ancestry; it goes back to the sixth century B.C., to Metrodorus of Lampsacus. The most extensive collection we have of such interpretation is found in the *Homeric Questions* of Heracleitus, a late compilation (first century A.D.), which begins exactly like Longinus: "Homer is everywhere impious, unless he be allegorized." Grube (*A Greek Critic*, p. 134) traces the history of the word. The term "alle-

divinities has (to the extent of his capacity) made the human beings in the Trojan tales into divinities and the divinities into human beings. But though to us, who are subject to hard destiny, death lies ahead as a haven from evils, he has made not the nature but the lucklessness of the divinities into something for the ages. 8. But much better than the fighting of the divinities are the ways in which he has made the daemonic element stand up as something truly undefiled, great, and undiluted, such as—and the passage has been worked out by many before us—the lines on Poseidon:

gory" itself literally means "addressing something in another or different way." Allegory is different from metaphor because it affects not one word but many. Cicero (*Letters to Atticus* 2.20.3) says that he will obscure his discussion of the current and dangerous political situation "in allegories." Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Letter to Pompeius* 2) complains of Plato's "long and numerous allegories, which have neither right measure nor right timing." By the time of Quintilian, the word has almost our modern meaning: in 8.6.44, he says that Horace's poem on "Ship of State" (*Odes* I.4) is an allegory. In 8.6.54, however, Quintilian shows that he is familiar with the rhetorical connection of allegory and irony. For the technique of allegorizing consider this interpretation by Charles Feidelson, Jr., of the passage from *Moby Dick* quoted as passage C in chapter 3 (n. on **beyond the tragic**):

> In one way, the sea mocks Pip by preserving him alive (his "finite body" is saved) but mad (his "infinite soul" is drowned). But whereas the previous discussion of Pip in this chapter emphasizes the "unnatural" aspects of his experience, this passage primarily deals with the compensations for his suffering. From this standpoint, he has been granted an insight that seems mad to normal men but is really "heaven's sense." The depths of the sea were like the earliest foundations of the universe ("the unwarped primal world") where wisdom is hidden, and also like the realm of God, where creation goes on eternally. The coral insects building up their reefs through aeons were like the divine ("God-omnipresent") force that made the land on the third day of Creation (Genesis 1:9). God himself became present to Pip in the form of a Great Weaver with his foot on the Loom of Time (a phrase used in chapter XLVII).
>
> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, ed. Charles Feidelson, Jr. (Indianapolis, New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), p. 530, n. 7.

**haven from evils:** The image goes back at least as far as Aeschylus and appears in Epictetus and Cicero. Longinus' words fall into iambics, as Russell observes, and may contain a submerged quotation.

**the lines on Poseidon:** A conflation of several passages from the *Iliad:* 13.18, 20.60, 13.19, 27.29. For an excellent discussion of the passage as an example of Longinus' conception of the "sublime" see Erich Auerbach's *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity*

Great ridges, woodlands trembled,
Crested peaks, the Trojans' city, the ships of the Grecians,
Under moving Poseidon's feet immortal; he walked on,
Strider of waves, and playing whales from sea depths
Ever emerge to behold their master. And,
Ocean exulting and parting his waves, onward his horses flew.

9. In this way also the lawgiver of the Jews, a man who did not just happen,

*and in the Middle Ages* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965) pp. 225-28.

**the lawgiver of the Jews:** A citation by a Greek critic from a biblical source is almost unique; hence the passage has been suspected as not authentic. Longinus' quotation does not correspond with the ancient Greek translation of the Bible, the Septuagint; either he was quoting from memory, or—if he was himself Jewish, like Caecilius—he may simply have made his own translation.

Philo (*That the Worse is Wont to Attack the Better* 79), in commenting on a passage from Genesis, 4.10, says that he will confine himself to the ideas, but the "sublimity" of the style is, he says, "well known to all who are not uninitiated in literature." His remark will not, presumably, have been addressed only to Jews, whether those who read Hebrew or the Greek Septuagint; it will therefore apply also to non-Jews, or Jews who had drifted almost completely away from their ancestral faith. Caecilius was apparently Jewish and may have fit either category. Philo describes Moses by the word "lawgiver"; his *Life of Moses* is one of his most extensive works and is clearly aimed at a non-Jewish audience. It is possible that Longinus read the book, and the following points made by Philo perhaps make the possibility likely: 1) on the opening page, Philo calls Moses the "lawgiver of the Jews"; 2) he says that one reason for his writing the life of Moses is the failure of Greek writers to pay attention to him, although knowledge of Hebrew culture is widespread; 3) he says (I.31) that Moses was superior to chance (see next note), and tells the story of Moses and Pharaoh's daughter in such a way as to demonstrate the point; 4) Philo's account of the way in which the Septuagint was composed suggests widespread knowledge of and about it (II.25 ff.). Philo's own Greek versions of the Hebrew often differ from those of the Septuagint.

Russell's note provides a summary of the controversy over the authenticity of the passage; his conclusion is sound: "The burden of proof lies with those who think the passage interpolated .... we have here a sort of parenthesis in the discussion ... Compare the reference to Hesiod in 9.5, which illustrates Homer by contrast as does this by similarity. Neither is essential, both are helpful."

**just happen:** the phrase is a regular Greek idiom used to show that the

since he made room for the power of the divine and made it appear in accordance with its worthiness, says in the introduction to his Rules, "God said"—what?—"Let there be light, and there was; let there be earth, and there was." 10. Perhaps I would not be troublesome, fellow pupil, if I should set down one more citation from Homer and his scenes about humans, for the sake of learning how it was his custom to keep up with heroic greatness. Suddenly mist and impenetrable night take hold of the fighting of the Hellenes; there Ajax, being without device, says:

> Father Zeus, from mist these sons of Achaea deliver;
> Make the sky clear, and give it to our eyes to see;
> And in the light, at least, destroy us.

How truly the emotion is Ajax's: you see, he does not pray to live (the request is too low for a hero); but since in the incapacitating gloom he did not have a way to apply his manhood to anything noble, being therefore under pressure because he works to no effect in the fighting, he requests

point in question, thought extraordinary, is not the result of chance but of explicable causes (see previous note). If Longinus were a Hellenized Jew, the little phrase "did not just happen" which he applies to Moses, and which he does not elaborate at all, may reveal a lingering Hebraic piety. At all events, Longinus is introducing an alien author to a pagan audience and claiming for him a respect equal to that given Homer.

**Rules:** The *Rules* are the *Nomoi, i.e.*, the Pentateuch, usually referred to as the Torah or *Law*. One often acquires a new sense of ancient works by translating their titles accurately, *e.g.*, Plato's *Polity* instead of *Republic:* its connection with Aristotle's *Politics* becomes clearer.

**what:** The syntax is difficult; we follow the punctuation and logic of William Smith and Russell. As Smith remarks (and claims the observation to be original), "That interrogation between the narrative part of the words of the Almighty himself, carries with it an air of reverence and veneration. It seems designed to awaken the reader and raise his awful attention to the voice of the great Creator."

**being without device:** The Greek is the negative form of the word from which we derive "machine," the word used in the Latinized Greek phrase *deus ex machina*, that is, a mechanism for solving a problem. Our older use of the English word "device," as in the biblical phrase "neither knowledge nor device," catches both senses.

**Ajax . . . says:** The quotation is from *Iliad* 17.645-47. The simple clauses of Ajax's request, and even some of the diction ("deliver us" and "give us"), are

light as swiftly as possible, so as to find a funeral shroud entirely worthy of his excellence—even if Zeus should fight against him. 11. But Homer breathes like a favorable breeze right there in the trials of Ajax and has himself felt no other emotion than [what these lines express]:

> Mad as Ares, shaking spears, or a fire destructive,
> Mad down ridges he goes, in thickets deep in a woodland,
> Foam of froth on lips.

All the same, throughout the *Odyssey* (and this we must also theorize about for many reasons) he shows that when a great nature is declining, there is—and this is a peculiarity of old age—a love of myth. 12. It is clear for many reasons that he composed it second; indeed we know it from his having throughout the *Odyssey* introduced as episodes of the Trojan War what was left over from the emotional experiences of those at Ilium; and, heaven knows, from his having presented as in payment of a long recognized debt wailings and lamentations for heroes. You see, the *Odyssey* is not

reminiscent of the Lord's Prayer, in which reverence and simple dignity are also combined.

**funeral shroud:** The word in the plural refers to funeral rites. The metaphor suggests the divine light enwraps him like a shroud as he dies and is buried. It is a metaphor used by Philostratus in *Lives of the Sophists* (502, 590, 600), where famous rhetoricians are said to have glory or good will as their "funeral shroud." In Homer, as throughout antiquity, burial was an elaborate process. The fullest account in Homer is given in the burial of Hector (*Iliad* 24.718 ff.); Lucian, in his essay *On Lamentation,* shows how elaborate the practice was in late antiquity.

**Mad as Ares . . . lips:** Homer, *Iliad* 15.605-07. The quotation is slightly adapted to make the words, which in Homer describe Hector, applicable to Homer himself.

**love of myth:** Aristotle, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1117b34), says that certain kinds of men like to sit around and tell stories; there is something of the same pejorative sense as we find in Longinus.

**composed it second:** Whether Homer wrote the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* first was much debated in antiquity. Russell's note contains a summary of the arguments and references.

**episodes:** The word "episode" is used by Aristotle (*Poetics* 1452b20) to denote one of the quantitative parts of tragedy (prologue, episode, exode, and chorus). It refers to someone entering a place where others (the chorus in a tragedy) are already located; the result is an "incident" or "scene," or—if long

other than a peroration to the *Iliad:*

> There brave Ajax lies, and there Achilles;
> There Patroclus lies, who counselled equal of heaven,
> There my own dear son.

13. And the same thing is responsible, I take it, for his making the whole body of the *Iliad,* written when his spirit was at its acme, dramatic and full of conflict, while the *Odyssey* is more of a narrative tale—a thing that is peculiar to old age. As a result, one may liken Homer in the *Odyssey* to a sun setting, the greatness of which remains apart from its intensity. He does not, you see, any longer observe a pitch equal to that of the Trojan section of the poem, nor does he keep the sublimities on a level, without any dips, nor

enough, an "act" in a play.

**peroration:** Almost universally translated as "epilogue" (Roberts, Prickard, Fyfe, Einarson, Russell, Dorsch); Grube has "sequel." "Epilogue" is little more than a transliteration of the Greek word; its two senses in English are not accurate renderings (one, a short piece coming at the end of a play, addressed to the readers; two, the concluding section of a novel, designed to complete the plan of the book). Longinus uses the noun only one other time (12.5), where it has its normal technical sense, the peroration of a speech. Einarson, in his note, suggests "peroration" as an alternative translation and properly points out that, in the later rhetoricians, a peroration contained as one of its three parts an appeal to pity. Longinus shows that he is using the word here with this point in mind: the epilogue, he says in ch. 12, is one of the places where intense emotion is appropriate. Longinus' use of the word, then, is a bold rhetorical image: he conceives of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as one great "speech-writing," of which the *Odyssey* is the peroration. The emphasis on "wailings and lamentations," which produce pity, and the parallel use in ch. 12, confirm this interpretation.

**There brave Ajax . . . dear son:** Homer, *Odyssey* 3.109-11.

**acme:** The word is probably a pun, for the word "acme" also has a special meaning in rhetorical terminology. It means something like a supreme effort, a culmination, of poetic and psychic energies in a brief passage or a single sentence. Hermogenes associates the virtue especially with Homer, and all three uses of the word in Longinus (here and in 9.14 and 9.15) refer to Homer.

**sun:** In 17.2 Longinus employs another image of the sun; there he says that as the dimmer lights of the stars are obscured by the brillance of the sun, so the rhetorical sophisms dim out when greatness is poured over them from everywhere. Sappho (frag. 34) uses a similar image of the moon: "Around the lovely moon the stars lose their brilliant beauty when her silver light illumines the

is there a similar pouring of emotions one on the other, nor a sense of flexibility and political life made dense by imagery based on truth; but both his absorption and wanderings in the mythic and the hard to believe appear in the ebbing of his greatness, as the ocean withdrawing gradually gives room to itself and deserts within its own measures. 14. In speaking of these things, the storms in the *Odyssey* have not really escaped my notice nor have the lines on the Cyclops and some other lines; but my tale is of old age—still, it is the old age of Homer; notwithstanding this, in all of these the mythic consistently prevails over the action. I have discussed these side issues in order to demonstrate how very easily things great in nature once past their acme are turned into showy trifles—such as the lines on the wineskin and those on the men fed like swine in Circe's house ("howling

world at its fullest."

**political life:** As Russell notes, "Longinus judges Homer here from the standpoint of a teacher of [political speeches]." Plato, in his dialogue *Ion*, attacks the view of Homer as the father of all knowledge; but later rhetoricians constantly cite Homeric examples, and a paean to Homer similar to Ion's appears in pseudo-Plutarch's *Life and Poetry of Homer*. Longinus himself thought of his work as an aid for men in political life (1.2).

**its own measures:** The passage is difficult and much disputed; Russell summarizes the various interpretations and arguments. Longinus uses two natural metaphors for the aging Homer: the setting sun and the withdrawing ocean. Both images picture a glory and sublimity that are lessening. What picture does Longinus have in mind—(a) the normal flow and ebb of the ocean or (b) some extraordinary flow and ebb? We argue, for a variety of reasons, that the phrase "its own measures" suggests interpretation (b): the measures of the ocean are not determined only by low tide but by high tide as well. If the ocean is withdrawing to its own measures, those measures must be the flexible ones determined by normal ebb and flow. Hence the ocean will have flooded and then withdrawn. The flood will represent Homer at his most sublime, in the *Iliad;* the withdrawal will represent Homer in his gradual decline, in the *Odyssey*. Consult the Supplementary Note in Appendix C for the full argument.

**discussed these side issues:** Although the verb in Greek is usually translated as "digressed," the English word is misleading, for it suggests irrelevance. Use of the device was, though not necessary, never irrelevant: it was an attempt to bring in material of a subordinate, and emotional, nature as a way of reinforcing the main point. The Romans translated the noun as both *digressio* and *aggressio*.

**howling:** Russell raises the question of whether the Greek word means "squealing" or "weeping." "Is Zoilus complaining about the vulgarity of the description or the improbability of pigs shedding tears?" Longinus uses the word only here. We have translated the

piglets," as Zoilus said), and Zeus reared like a youngling by and among doves, and the ten days without food in the shipwreck, and the unpersuasive lines on the slaughter of the suitors. What else, you see, might we say of these episodes than that they are in the dreams of Zeus? 15. And what I have said about the *Odyssey* should be investigated for a second reason also, so that you might understand how, when their emotion is past the acme, great prose-writers and poets slip off into characterization. Such is the description of characterization in Odysseus' household, as if it were a kind of comedy of character.

word as "howling" to preserve the ambiguity.

**the wineskin. . . the suitors:** The incidents alluded to occur in Homer in the following places: the wineskin: *Odyssey* 10.17; the piglets: *Odyssey* 10.237; the chick: *Odyssey* 12.62; the shipwreck: *Odyssey* 20.447; the suitors: *Odyssey* 22 *passim*.

**Zoilus:** A fourth century (B.C.) Cynic, he has become the type of the carping, nit-picking critic for his sustained attacks on Homer; his nickname was "he who goads at Homer." His closest English analogue is the eighteenth century critic John Dennis, who used the same kind of brutally captious logic on the poems of Pope. None of Zoilus' work survives except for the quotations in the Homeric scholia.

**the dreams of Zeus:** The allusion has not been identified. Russell cites Dio Chrysostom (11.129), where the *Odyssey* is called a dream. The problem is grammatical: is the genitive objective or subjective—do the dreams come from Zeus or are they about Zeus or are they the dreams which he has? Russell, probably rightly, elects for the last: Homer is the Zeus of poets. If so, then the phrase is perhaps a jocular allusion to the proverbial phrase "Homer nods," which is modeled on the pictures of Zeus sleeping while events escape his notice: see *Iliad* 24.346-60 and Lucian's *Timon* 2-3.

**emotion. . . characterization:** Aristotle says that each of Homer's two major poems has a twofold nature: the *Iliad* is simple and straightforward and emotional; the *Odyssey* is complex and deals with characterization (Aristotle, *Poetics* 1459b14-16). Works that dealt with character and characterization, that is, which were what we call "realistic," were in antiquity generally comic, for they lacked "seriousness and tension" (Russell). The plays of Menander—of which we now have a complete specimen, the *Dyscolus*—make very clear what the ancients meant by "characterization." Neither Longinus nor Aristotle means that the characterization is better in the *Odyssey* than in the *Iliad*; the characters in the *Odyssey* are what we call more natural, more lifelike, more domestic. The Elizabethan genre of "domestic tragedy" (*e.g.*, Heywood's *A Woman Killed With Kindness*) as compared with *Hamlet* or *Macbeth* reveals the same difference in characterization.

An anonymous *Art of Rhetoric* (Spengel I.427-28) defines emotion as an "opportune condition of the psyche,

exciting a more intense attraction or repulsion, such as pity, anger, fear, hate, desire. It differs from character or characterization thus: emotion is hard to excite, character is easy to excite, for character is a disposition of the soul that is ingrained and hard to let go of, such as that of fathers for their sons." Demetrius, in his book *On the Structure of Sentences*, remarks that character is often revealed by the jokes a man tells (171), and that the letter, like the dialogue, is full of character: nowhere more than in letters, he says, do men reveal their souls and their characters.

Sophocles described the plays of his last period (*e.g.*, *Electra, Philoctetes*) as plays of characterization and the best (Plutarch, *Moralia* 79b). Neoptolemus is more natural and lifelike than Haemon or Antigone; so, too, in Shakespeare we can see a greater naturalness in Miranda and Ferdinand, however lightly they are sketched in detail and significance, than in Cordelia and Edgar. In Homer, we may compare the characterization of Telemachus and the swineherd with such figures from the *Iliad* as Patroclus and Diomedes. Works dominated by emotion go to extremes either of sublimity or baseness; those dominated by characterization work in a narrower range of human nature.

**a comedy of character:** The phrase is often translated "comedy of manners" (Roberts, Grube, Einarson, Russell); Prickard, Fyfe, and Dorsch render it, as we do, "comedy of character." The phrase "comedy of manners" has perhaps too close an association with Restoration comedy to be quite accurate; even today it suggests sophisticated life in the upper classes, as in the plays of Noel Coward. In modern times, the novel best illustrates the mode, *e.g.*, Richardson, Fielding, Jane Austen, Thackeray—Dickens sometimes, though he tends to burst the bonds of this mode and become too full of emotion— Trollope, and Marquand. Greek novels were not a serious genre and were too highly romantic to be used as illustrations by the ancient critics, although they have many natural touches.

## Chapter 10

# Selection

COME, now, let us see whether we have the other faculty capable of making speeches and writings sublime. Now, then, since in all things there are certain parts which are by nature fundamentally in session together with their material, we must come to be capable over and over again (and this capacity is responsible for sublimity) [1] of selecting from all

**the other faculty:** Longinus here uses the Greek word which means "the other of two." Such a fine use reveals the extraordinary control which Longinus had over his material and organization; he is referring to his fivefold, two-part division in the first paragraph of ch. 8. There he had said that two sources of sublimity arose from nature: 1) a solid thrust of conception; 2) intense and enthusiastic emotion. The first of these was dealt with in ch. 9; now the second is taken up in the subsequent chapter, 10. Hence Longinus uses the word meaning "the other of two."

**in session together:** From the Greek we derive the English word "sanhedrin"; it means literally "to sit together," *i.e.*, to hold a conference or meeting. By extension it refers to a set of unified elements. The word is a good example of a problem which plagues translators: was the metaphor contained in the root of this word petrified for Longinus or was he aware of it? Because Longinus likes puns and plays on words, and because he had an acute sense of distinctions in the meanings of compounds, we have assumed, as far as possible, that he was conscious of the root-meaning of the words which he chose, even at the risk of making him more conscious than he may have been. Good writers coming at the end of a great cultural period tend to have a highly developed sense of etymology, although not all cultures possess the typographic devices to show that sense, such as we see in the following passage from Thoreau (*Walden*, ch. 1, *ad fin.*):

> Not long since I was present at the auction of a deacon's effects, for his life had not been ineffectual . . . as usual, a great proportion was trumpery which had begun to accumulate in his father's day. Among the rest was a dried tapeworm. And now, after lying half a century in his garret and other dust holes, these things were not burned; instead of a *bon*fire, or purifying destruction of them, there was an *auction*, or increasing or them.

See also Appendix B, "Metaphor in Longinus."

**selecting:** Longinus holds that the very material from which the artist made a selection had its own organic wholeness; we may contrast this view with that implied, say, in Johnson's description of the artist's work (*Rambler* 23):

that brings itself out to our attention what is just right and [2] of setting it together so as to make a unity, a kind of body. You see, the one drives on the audience by the selection of the points to be taken up, the other by the densification of what has been selected. Sappho, for example, on each occasion takes from the attendant circumstances of life and from truth itself the emotional experiences which accompany erotically passionate madness. And where does she show her excellence? Where she is powerful at selecting the high points of these emotional experiences and their hypertensed moments and binds them with and to each other.

> uniting heterogeneous ideas, digesting independent hints, and collecting into one point the several rays of borrowed lights emitted often with contrary directions.

**the one . . . the other:** "The one" refers to the power of selection, discussed in the opening sentence; "the other" refers to "setting things together." The word "densification" has three main senses: 1) scientific: of meteorological phenomena, like clouds and ice; a subsidiary medical use denotes the beating of the pulse; 2) military: close order, especially of the phalanx; 3) logical and rhetorical: of thought or style which is condensed, tight, compact. As the verb "drives on" has both military and medical connotations, it is not clear which image Longinus intends. The word "intersection," used below also, has both medical and military meanings; consequently it cannot be used to determine the image.

**Sappho, for example:** Had Longinus done nothing more than quote this poem, we should be indebted to him, for it is the only manuscript of the poem we have, and one of only two extensive quotations from Sappho preserved for us. Its fame in antiquity was great: Catullus translated it (51), Plutarch alludes to it three times. The quotation in the Greek manuscript is written out as if it were prose, as are the other poetical quotations. Although we have translated the last line, the sense can only be approximate, since the text is corrupt here. Any wordiness which the reader finds in the translation comes from the need to convey the dramatic situation: often a single Greek word must be translated by a phrase. The poetess is watching a tête-à-tête between a girl whom she loves and a young man; the girl has called the young man to her and made him sit down in front of her.

**under the same emotional experience:** The phrase refers to the unity of representation achieved by Sappho from her selection of details: starting with material which consisted of parts, some of which had a fundamental relationship to the material, Sappho selected those parts which had two characteristics: one, an everyday and general universality; two, the power to make themselves conspicuous. These she assembled into a whole that was purer and more intense than the whole made by the parts in their relationship to the original material. Longinus has no noun for his phrase "under the same"; some critics, *e.g.*, Russell, supply "moment," but we have preferred "emotional experience."

2. Seems to me that man to the gods is equal
Who sits across from you near and hears
Your sweet voice,
Laughter of love. 'Tis a cause to flutter
Heart within rib-cage; should I merely
Behold you, the voice within me sounds
No longer.
Yet, the tongue is broken; a gentle fire
Runs beneath my flesh in a rush; seeing
Leaves my eyes, my ears echo in a boom
Of humming.
Sweat upon me pours, as a tremble seizes me
All over; I seem wanner than the pale green grass,
To be near dying, lost in
A weakness.
All must be endured, since as a wretch. . .

3. Don't you wonder at how, under the same emotional experience, she seeks out soul and body, hearing and tongue, sight and color, all departing as if they were someone else's, and throughout the contrasts she simultaneously burns with cold and speaks irrational sense (you see, she is either frightened of death or within a little of being dead), so that in her appears not one kind but an intersection of emotions? Though all such things come to lovers, her taking the high points and putting them together into the same emotional experience have worked up the conspicuous quality of the poem. And this, I take it, is the same way in which the poet [Homer] chooses the most difficult moments of winter storms. 4. Though the poet of the *Arimaspeia* takes it that these lines are powerful:

**intersection:** The Greek word, from which we derive "Synod," is also used of two hostile armies meeting, of national assemblies, of a constriction in the throat, of an astronomical conjunction. The root is the word for "road, way," to which has been added the prefix "with, together." It suggests a place where roads come together and where many people congregate. Since Sappho combines disparate senses and even opposite sensations, the word is singularly apt; it picks up the image of a joint "session" used above.

**the *Arimaspeia*:** Traditionally ascribed to Aristeas of Proconesus, whom Herodotus places in the seventh century. Some scholars have believed these lines really to have been written in a much later period; see Russell for a summary of the arguments. Aristeas disappeared from his home town for seven years; when he returned, he claimed to have

This is a great and wondrous thing to our minds:
Men who dwell upon the watery ocean, away from dry land.
Wretched, they have onerous duties;
Holding their eyes towards the stars, they bend their hands to the ocean;
Holding their hands to the gods very often,
Making invocations as their minds are thrown to misery.

I take it as clear to everybody that what is said has more of the flowery than of the fearful. 5. How does Homer do it? One passage, you see, out of many, may be chosen:

He fell upon them just as a wave falls down on a swift ship,
Fierce, wind-nursed by masses of air, and the vessel is
Hidden in ocean's froth as an awful blast of a windstorm
Roars on her high mast, and all her sailors quaking in spirit,
Desperate; out-of-under death they are barely carried.

6. Aratus also tried his hand at transferring this same thing:

Barely he wards off death with a plank.

traveled in Siberia and to the land of the Hyperboreans. As Russell observes, the lines quoted by Longinus really describe not a storm but the "permanent discomforts" of those who sail on the seas. Ancient writers are full of an admiring and awful horror of sailing.

**flowery:** The Greek word is used of flowers, froth or scum on the sea, and choice passages in literature (it is one of the roots of our word "anthology"); Longinus is probably playing with all these meanings, for in comparison to Homer's storm he finds the poem of Aristeas no more than some whitecaps.

**one passage:** *Iliad* 15-624-28. The passage is one of two successive images for Hector as he attacks the Greek camp; in the one following, he is compared to a lion. In the first, the Greeks are compared, like Oedipus in Sophocles (*Oedipus at Colonus* 1211-48), to a crag on which the sea-waters break in vain. Like all the passages quoted from Homer, this one gains from a knowledge of the context.

**Aratus:** Aratus (third century B.C.) wrote an astronomical poem entitled *Phenomena;* it was highly popular in antiquity; Cicero, among others, trans-

Notwithstanding this, he has made it petty and smooth rather than frightening; he has gone beyond the limit of the danger by saying, "A plank wards off Hades." Now, then, it does "ward off." But the poet [Homer] never goes beyond the limit of what is powerful, but he gives a likeness of men just barely not killed by every wave. And in fact he made it necessary for prepositions which should not be set together to be set together, against nature, and he forced together with each other the words "out-of-under death," torturing the verse into being similar to the emotion which befell the men; and by the constriction of the verse he has molded the emotion to a high pitch and has almost stamped his own idiom for danger into a form for his style: "they are brought out-of-under death." 7. Not otherwise has Archilochus written about a shipwreck and Demosthenes in the announcement [to the Athenians of their defeat], where he says: "It was, you know, evening. . . ." They purified, one might say, the best pieces and set them one

lated it, and there are many ancient commentaries. The line quoted by Longinus is 299.

**likeness:** The Greek word is "icon," from which we get our word "iconography." Aristotle simply classifies icon, by which he means what we call a simile, as a metaphor differing in the way it is introduced (*Rhetoric* 1410b17).

**form:** A grammatical pun, and one which Longinus is fond of (*e.g.*, 12.2). It is duplicable in English, for the Greek word, like the English "form," has many senses. Originally the Greek word means "to blow, strike"; then to "imprint"; then "impression"; then "mould" or "matrix" or "form"; then "exact replica"; then "form" in general, and in particular, a grammatical form: the word is used by Plato to mean "archetypal form," as in Longinus 13.1. The root of the Greek of the word here translated "idiom" refers to that which is private, peculiar, personal. Longinus says that Homer has taken his private idiom and made it into a public (grammatical) form.

**Archilochus:** A Greek poet of the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.; his work survives only in fragments. We do not know just what passage Longinus alludes to.

**"It was, we know, evening . . . .":** The passage was so well known that Longinus could simply quote the opening words. Demosthenes (*On the Crown* 18.169) describes the effect on Athens of news that Philip had seized Elateia. The Greek rhetorician Hermogenes, in his book *On Ideas* (Spengel II.349), cites this passage and one also from the poet Archilochus in discussing the effect of trochaic rhythms and short clauses, effects which, he says, are also common in tragedy. Even in translation, Demosthenes' alternation of short and longer sentences and clauses is noticeable, as well as a marvelous power of continuous narrative, achieved through a selection of dramatic details and designed to make the audience relive an experience which Demosthenes begins by noting that his audience remembers.

**purified:** The word, which contains

on another according to their excellence, arranging throughout in the middle nothing bombastic or frigid or collegian. For these defects spoil the whole structure, just as the arrangement of great objects forms gaps or spaces when the parts are joined and loosely attached to each other.

the root *catharsis,* was used by Plato (*Republic* 365D) to show what a sculptor does as he "polishes up" his statue. Longinus is preparing for the great metaphor with which closes this chapter. See below.

**in the middle:** The phrase "in the middle" refers to the military tactic employed by Agamemnon, in which weaklings and cowards are stationed between wings composed of braver men, so that they can be bolstered and prevented from fleeing. Ancient critics also use the image, for the term is a technical one in rhetoric—one of the "figures of speech" (see note on figures in ch. 8). Herodian, in his *On Figures* (Spengel III.95), shows it to be something like a dramatically placed parenthetical interjection; *e.g.,* Marc Antony's lines (*Julius Caesar* III.ii):

> But here's a parchment with seal
> of Caesar—I found it in his closet—
> 'tis his will.

**. . . or collegian:** A description of the artistic process: the artist must select the "eminent" and "universal particulars" and "what stands out" which naturally inhere in the subject matter, strip them of accidental accretions, and then combine them. Failure to clean away any rough edges will result in unsightly gaps, as Longinus is about to say in his closing image.

For the eighteenth century's view of the artistic process, see Imlac's justly famous speech in ch. 10 of Johnson's *Rasselas:*

> . . . the province of poetry is to describe Nature and Passion, which are always the same . . . no kind of knowledge was to be overlooked . . . mountains and deserts . . . every tree of the forest and flower in the valley . . . the crags of the rock and the pinnacles of the palace . . . To a poet nothing can be useless . . . The business of a poet . . . is to examine, not the individual, but the species; to remark general properties and large appearances: he does not number the streaks of the tulip, or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest. He is to exhibit in his portraits of nature such *prominent and striking features,* as recall the original to *every mind* . . . he must . . . observe the *power* of all the *passions* in all their *combinations* . . . and rise to general and transcendental truths, which will always be the same . . . contemn the applause of his own time, and commit his claims to the justice of posterity . . . by incessant practice, familiarize to himself every delicacy of speech and grace of harmony. [Italics ours]

Editors of Johnson have remarked on the similarities of this passage to Burke's recently published *Enquiry Into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful;* the debt of Burke to Longinus is easily demonstrable: see Samuel Monk's book *The Sublime.*

**For these defects:** The sentence is notoriously hard to read, and it was made so

deliberately by the author, for Longinus is here doing what he so often does—imitating in his own prose the vice or virtue which he is discussing. A translation of the highly metaphorical sentence ought to make the following points clear: certain kinds of defects ruin the unity of style; these defects are comparable to gaps and spaces in what was intended to be an architectural unity; a metaphorical example of such a structure is the kind of wall built hurriedly in wartime, in which the individual stones used do not fit neatly together, with the result that the wall has gaps and openings and its parts are attached loosely and temporarily.

We have rendered the sentence rather freely in the translation. A more literal version will enable the reader to check the relationship between the syntax and argument point by point:

> The [defects], you see, damage the whole, even as great things produce gaps or spaces when they are being arranged [in the manner of stones used in] a wall built by allies [in wartime which are joined] by a temporary attachment to one another.

## Chapter 11

# Development

IN session with what has been laid down is an excellence which they call development: it occurs whenever in narrative or forensic speeches

**in session with:** for the metaphor, see ch. 10, n. on **in session together.** Longinus links chs. 10 and 11 by this metaphor and by the phrase which follows.

**development:** the older term is "amplification." In 7.3, Longinus had used the term "underdevelopment" (see note there).

Aristotle gives no formal definition of development; for him both it and its opposite are enthymemes (*Rhetoric* 1403a16 ff.). He specifies, though, that it is particularly suited to epideictic speeches (*Rhetoric* 1368a27). Quintilian (8.4) distinguished five kinds of development:

1. Development in the term itself: *e.g.*, instead of saying that a man was *beaten up*, saying that he was *killed* or *slaughtered* or *massacred.*
2. Development by increment: *e.g.*, Shylock's speech in *The Merchant of Venice* (III.i): "Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is?"
3. Development by comparison: *e.g.*, "If my slaves feared me as your fellow citizens fear you, I would leave my house" (Cicero, *Catiline* I.7).
4. Development by deduction: *e.g.*, "In his slaves' quarters there were purple carpets which belonged to Pompey"—from which we are to deduce what his own quarters were like.
5. Development by accumulation: *e.g.*, "it is an offence to tie up a Roman citizen, a crime to beat him, almost treason to put him to death. What shall I say it is to crucify him?"

Longinus did not like the rather generalized definitions given by the rhetorical handbooks, as he makes clear in chs. 11 and 12.

Excellent specimens of development can be found in such authors as John Donne (the prose) and Sir Thomas Browne, where it generally contributes to sublimity; in Lyly's *Euphues*, however, the device too often tries to stand by itself, apart from sublimity, and suffers just what Longinus says it does. Here are two passages from John Donne, one from an early, one from a late work, in which development is used poorly and well:

> That women are inconstant I with any man confess, but that inconstancy is a bad quality, I against any man will maintain. For everything, as it is one better than another, so is it fuller of change. The heavens themselves continually turn, the stars move, the moon changeth; fire whirleth, air flyeth, water ebbs and flows,

which, in accordance with their periods, admit many starting points and

the face of the earth altereth her looks, time stays not; the colour that is most light will take most dyes. So in men, they that have the most reason are the most intolerable in their designs, and the darkest or most ignorant do seldomest change; therefore women changing more than men have also more reason. They cannot be immutable like stocks, like stones, like the earth's dull center. Gold that lyeth still, rusteth; water, corrupteth; air that moveth not, poisoneth; then why should that which is the perfection of other things be imputed to women as greatest imperfection.

(*Paradoxes* I)

Perchance he for whom this bell tolls may be so ill as that he knows not it tolls for him. And perchance I may think myself so much better than I am as that they who are about me, and see my state may have caused it to toll for me, and I know not that. The church is catholic, universal: so are all her actions. All that she does belongs to all. When she baptizes a child, that action concerns me; for that child is thereby connected to that head which is my head too, and engraffed into that body whereof I am a member. And when she buries a man, that action concerns me. All mankind is of one author, and is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language; and every chapter must be so translated.

See also the passage from *Euphues* quoted in ch. 3, n. on **Gorgias of Leontini**; the one from Johnson quoted in ch. 4, n. on **comparative judgement;** and that from Sir Thomas Browne quoted in ch. 8, n. on **selection of words and the trope and "made up" elaboration of style.**

**with their periods:** Russell and Grube both argue that the term cannot here refer to the period, or periodic sentence, as it is known. They differ on whether Longinus' only other use of the term (ch. 40.1) does. It is best to take both passages as doing so.

The periodic sentence is by nature suitable for amplification and greatness. As Aristotle defines it (*Rhetoric* 1409a35), a periodic sentence is one which "has a beginning and an end and a greatness which can be seen easily at once." Demetrius (*On Style* 11-22) begins his discussion of periods with Aristotle's definition; he then offers an explanation of the term—it is drawn from racing, where runners start at one point, make a circle, and return.

Normally we take the periodic sentence to be a long sentence; to the ancient rhetoricians, the good periodic sentence consisted of no fewer than two clauses and no more than four. Such clauses could themselves, however, be very short: Hermogenes (*On Invention,* Spengel II.240) quotes as an example of a "concise" period one containing only six words. The period in the ancient sentence was, moreover, closely connected with vocal delivery, and Dionysius specifies that a period should be no greater than the full breath of a man. (In fact, the term "breath" itself became a rhetorical term.) But what is important

pauses, one great passage is wheeled in on top of another and is driven in on top of the passage which is increasing in force. 2. And whether this development comes by addressing oneself to commonplaces or by being powerful—by a strengthening either of matters or of arguments—or by

in the good period is to have enough clauses to allow for a turn or bend. Without such, the name "period" or "road around" is not appropriate.

Dionysius, in his book *On Composition* (19), remarks that "the best style is that which has the most places for resting." "Places for resting" is the very term Longinus uses to open his discussion of development. Since Longinus is using the term "development" in a much broader sense than do the rhetorical handbooks, we need not be surprised to find that "development" is not generally associated in the handbooks with the periodic sentence. Dionysius will use both periodic and non-periodic sentences; the sentences which are periodic will be composed now of long clauses, now of short clauses. Two places for resting, then, exist in the best style: 1) between periodic and non-periodic sentences; 2) within the clauses of a periodic sentence. Since Longinus is speaking here of development—a term which supposes that one subject is receiving extended treatment—it is reasonable to assume that he has in mind the periodic sentence as the kind most appropriate for such treatment. And in fact, most of the sentences given as illustrations of development are of the periodic style.

**pauses:** If Longinus has the periodic sentence in mind, then the pauses may refer metaphorically to those points in the race-course where the runner-rhetorician makes a turn, a good moment for strategic shifts.

**wheeled in . . . passage which is increasing in force:** the images are drawn from the stage. "Wheel in" refers to the device used in Greek theatres to wheel in characters who cannot walk—*e.g.*, Ajax in Sophocles' *Ajax* or the old man in Menander's *Dyscolus*—because they are dead or crippled; such moments are always ones of great *pathos*. The verb "drive in" is also a theatrical term used for bringing persons onto the stage. The phrase we have translated "increasing in force" literally means "upward steps" or even "rungs of a ladder"; it is exactly correspondent to our word "climax," in sense and etymology.

**commonplaces:** these are defined by the anonymous *Art of Rhetoric* (Spengel I.448) as the kind of starting point in an argument which anyone might use. Theon, in his *Progymnasmata* (Spengel II.106), says that they are speeches of development dealing with mistakes and manly deeds; in other words, they deal with the kind of matter about which most men have something to say. Longinus, in his comparison of Cicero and Demosthenes, suggests that Cicero excelled in his use of commonplaces, which are especially suited to introductions and perorations, where large general statements come in best. Cicero is supposed to have kept a file of introductions for use on appropriate occasions. See below, ch. 12, n. on **topics.**

**arguments:** The word refers to the kind of argument used in ordinary discussions rather than strictly philosophical proofs. Perhaps the full phrase here

building up works or emotions (you see, there are thousands of forms of development), all the same the public speaker must know that none of these methods by itself, apart from sublimity, can be established as complete, unless, as I see it, it is in lamentations or—heaven knows—in belittlings; but for other methods of development, whenever you take out the sublime, it is as if you took the soul out of the body. For the effectiveness immediately loses its pitch and is emptied, unless strengthened by sublimities. 3. Certainly, though, for the sake of lucidity, we ought to define how these current pronouncements differ from what was said just before (when we presented a kind of sketch of the high points we would take up and arranged them into a unity) and how generally sublimities differ from developments.

("matters or arguments") is best taken as a hendiadys meaning "practical arguments."

**unless . . . belittlings:** the rhetoric of the phrasing is to be noticed. In addition to the oath "heaven knows," Longinus has put in the particle noting an inferential surprise—here translated "I see it." Longinus is managing the illusion of a conversational tone, and he wishes to suggest that he has just thought of a couple of exceptions to his own huge generalization, embodied in this long sentence. Lamentations are, of course, a low form of emotion and hence by nature not sublime; belittlings are the inverse of development and also, by nature, cannot be sublime.

**just before:** in ch. 10, especially at the begining.

**high points . . . into unity:** Longinus here hints, rather broadly, at his own imitative technique: just as Sappho, Homer, and Demosthenes had been praised for their powers of selecting high points and setting them together into unity (10.1.3), so Longinus indicates that he has done the same thing in his sketch of their art.

## Chapter 12

# Sublimity and Development

NOW, though, the definition of the technical writers is not satisfactory to me. Development, they say, is a speech or writing which sets greatness around the subject. This could be a definition common to sublimity and emotions and tropes, since indeed these, too, set some sort of greatness around speeches and writings. But to me these appear to diverge from one another: sublimity lies in what has been made lofty, development in multiplicity. For this reason sublimity often subsists even in a single concept, but development subsists entirely in quantity and a kind of abundance. 2. And development is, to put it in a formula, a filling up together of all the segments and topics that bring something to the subjects, one which strengthens what is being argued by dwelling on it, and which differs from proof in this way—because though the proof demonstrates what is being sought. . .

*(a lacuna of two leaves [four pages or about 4%] occurs here)*

. . .[Plato] like some sea, pours forth his expansive greatness most richly on many occasions. 3. As a result, I take it that though the orator is more emotional and, throughout his speeches and writings, has more fervor and fire, the other, set in a bold and appropriately great impressiveness, does not

**topics:** a word of various and vexed meanings. In English, we preserve part of the Greek word's sense of "place" in our word "commonplaces"; Greek and Latin, however, distinguished between commonplaces and "particular" places (see Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1358a10 ff.). Commonplaces were general statements applicable to all fields and disciplines—*e.g.*, "if equals are added to equals the results are equals"—what in geometry are called "common notions" or "axioms"; "particular" places were restricted to specific disciplines—like the postulates in Euclid. From "commonplaces" many arguments could be drawn, many instances offered as exemplification (see Aristotle's *Topics*). For Longinus' word for "commonplace," see ch. 11, n. on **commonplaces.**

**proof:** refers to the various kinds of proofs used by public speakers; these are analyzed in detail in the first book of Aristotle's *Rhetoric.*

turn cold—but he does not strain himself towards the subject in the same way. 4. And, dearest Terentianus, in no other ways than these is it my opinion—and I am speaking as if it were allowed for us Greeks to know something about this—that Cicero differs from Demosthenes in great passages. You see, Demosthenes is great by a sublimity that is abrupter, Cicero by a profusion; while our man, because he is such as to set everything on fire and catch it by his force, swiftness, power, may be likened to lightning or a thunderbolt, Cicero, I take it, is like some conflagration that absorbs from all sides, feeds everywhere, and rolls on, for he has great capacity for remaining on the topic and for igniting again at various times and in various ways and for stirring himself up again by taking in more fuel. 5. But you would decide these things critically better than I. But the

**turn cold:** the primary meaning is, of course, that Plato does not lose his fire and intensity because of a concern for impressiveness. Longinus admires Plato unreservedly; other ancient critics censured him for his collegian style (see citations in Russell's note to criticisms by Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Plutarch).

**Cicero . . . Demosthenes:** this is the famous adjudication of Demosthenes and Cicero. Russell notes that all three great digressions are in this form (that of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* [9.11.5], that of true greatness and faultlessness [33-36], and the one here). The rules for such a comparison are given in the *Progymnasmata* of Theon (Spengel II.112-15).

**You see, Demosthenes:** in this long sentence, Longinus imitates the style first of Demosthenes and then of Cicero, *e.g.*, the three quick nouns without connectives ("swiftness, strength, power") balanced against the three rather profusely and completely phrased principal clauses.

**profusion:** Longinus uses a water-image of Plato at the end of paragraph 2; here he uses a fire-image for Demosthenes, a water image for Cicero to point up their essential difference. Once that is established, he then employs fire imagery for each, and then returns to a water-image for Cicero at the very end, first repeating "profusion" and then developing and amplifying it by the powerful word "deluge." The word is pejorative, like Hamlet's picture of the player-king, who—if he had a genuine "motive and . . . cue for passion"—would "drown the stage." Longinus takes up the image again at the beginning of ch. 13. Perhaps the mentions of "profusions" are an echo of Cicero's fondness for the image in his oratorical writings (*On the Orator* 2.62.64 and *Brutus* 274, 325). Since the comparison is subtly derogatory of Cicero, Longinus stages it well: he lets the accumulated impact of his own values (emotion, intensity, sublimity) operate quietly in the reader's memory; and he manages his offhand tone of self-depreciation by deferring ultimately to the critical judgment of Terentianus.

**these things you:** "these things" refers only to Cicero's qualities, as Longinus insists that he is a better judge of Demosthenes for the same reason that Teren-

right moments for Demosthenes' sublimity and hypertensings are in his powerful passages and his intense emotions and his knowing when one ought to astound the audience. The right moment for a Ciceronian profusion comes when one must deluge the audience—a time fitting to address oneself to commonplaces and peroration and for stepping alongside the subject and for all of the expressive and epideictic passages, for writings on history and nature, and no small number of other kinds.

tianus is a better judge of Cicero: their respective knowledges of Greek and Latin. Russell neatly supplies "Romans" after "you."

**powerful:** the root word in Greek is an old one used in a very colloquial sense just like that of our "terribly" or "awfully" in such a phrase as "an awfully good speaker": it implies both skill and force (see 44.2). "Powerful" is always a positive word in Longinus, who uses it of his favorite authors (Demosthenes especially, but also of Homer, Plato, Thucydides, and Sappho). He distinguishes it from the kind of awfulness or terribleness which is hateful (9.5) and from bombastic rant (3.1); twice he associates it with the quality of being "hypertense" (10.1 and 12.5).

**stepping alongside the subject:** that is, digressions, although the English word has come to suggest irrelevance. The word is variously defined by the ancient rhetoricians. One of the best is found in the anonymous *Art of Rhetoric* (Spengel I.436), though the anonymous author rejects it: "a running out of the speech in a similitude or imitation of what has occurred."

The word Longinus chooses for "digression" ("stepping alongside the subject") is a technical term of Old Comedy (Aristophanes) and denotes that part of the play in which the chorus came forward and addressed the audience in the poet's name. It also means "straying," "overstepping," "illusion," and "transition." One of the most famous and relevant "digressions" in oratory appears in Cicero's speech defending the citizenship of the poet Archias. After disposing of the case briefly and easily, Cicero makes the bulk of his speech an exalted defense of education and culture. The speech of Pico della Mirandola (*On the Dignity of Man)* is also an example of a digression that is more important than the *apologia* proper. In both antiquity and the Renaissance, orators and public figures frequently interrupted their discourses to insert (or digress from) the stated subject in order to make autobiographical justifications of themselves coupled with biographical attacks on their opponents. These too may be considered as "digressions"; they are often powerful and moving, and—in a writer like Milton, for example—provide us with personal information of a touching kind.

**writings on history and nature:** by this time history was almost a branch of rhetoric and allowed for passages of display. We should think of Gibbon in English and not the pedestrian journals of history. Ecstatic raptures growing out of scientific observations are common: ancient science was often written in poetry and shared its rhetoric (*e.g.*, Empedocles and Lucretius); Cicero's voice rises in such passages, and Seneca is full of them.

## Chapter 13

# Mimesis and Emulation

THOUGH Plato (you see, I return to him) flows on without disturbing a pebble, he is no less great. Having read in the *Republic,* you are not ignorant of his type of form: he says that

> Those in wisdom and excellence inexperienced, but in feasting and the like always present, are carried downward, it seems, and wander there throughout life, but towards the truth they never gaze nor raise themselves,

**flows on . . . without stirring a pebble:** the phrase is itself an allusion to a passage in Plato (*Theaetetus* 144B). Longinus is also picking up the water imagery used of Cicero (ch. 12.4-5) and is justifying his digression on Demosthenes and Cicero by returning to the water-image which he had applied to Plato in 10.2, just after the lacuna. He is, in addition, making one more gentle insult of Cicero: of Cicero he had used the word "profusion" and even "deluge"; of Plato he uses a milder form of "pouring"; in Longinus' submerged quotation from Plato, the allusion is to a stream of olive-oil poured out on the young men in a Greek gymnasium. In 10.2, Plato's sea-like calm had been emphasized by the adjective "unruffled," regularly used of open seas. The nexus of etymological puns and jokes is worthy of Plato himself.

The passage from the *Theaetetus* seems to have been a favorite with Longinus, who alludes to it at least twice verbally (here and in the phrase "ships without ballast" in 2.2). Through his picture of the young Theaetetus, who takes to his studies with gentle and docile perceptiveness, flowing like a stream of olive-oil, Longinus may be alluding to his own relationship with Terentianus.

**having read . . . you are not ignorant:** Longinus, as he had kept up his lightly mordant depreciation of Cicero in the first half of his sentence, keeps up his familiar mockery of Terentianus in the second half. "You have read the *Republic,* of course," says Longinus—as he makes a literary allusion to another of Plato's dialogues—"so of course you will know just what I mean about Plato's fluid copiousness." Despite Longinus' repeated gestures of deference to the superior tastes of Terentianus (1.4, 12.5), it is unlikely that the Latin knew Greek as well as the Greek knew Latin.

**form:** another of Longinus' many puns on this word (see ch. 10, n. on **form**). The word means "type, archetype (in Platonic terminology), form, case, mode, genre." Longinus plants it here so that he can exploit its various senses below.

> nor do they taste a safe and pure pleasure, but like cattle gazing downwards and bent towards the ground and pasture they feed and fatten themselves and copulate, and from greed for these things, kicking and butting with iron horns and hooves, they kill each other on account of their insatiate greed.

2. This man demonstrates to us, if we do not wish to disregard him, how another way, besides those mentioned, stretches to the sublime. It is the mimesis and emulation of the great prosewriters and poets who came before us. And to this aim, of course, dearest friend, let us hold fast. Many, you see,

**demonstrates:** perhaps, by this word which also means "display," Longinus intends an allusion to that branch of rhetoric—speech of display, or the epideictic speech—which Plato is most hostile to, and which he parodies in many dialogues, notably the *Phaedrus* and the *Menexenus,* as well as *passim* in the *Protagoras* and the *Symposium.*

**mimesis and emulation:** in English, "imitation" is used both of the activity and the result of that activity. Because *mimesis* has been domesticated in English now, especially by Erich Auerbach in his book *Mimesis,* we use "mimesis" for the activity.

Despite the huge role played by the doctrine of mimesis in ancient art, no formal definition of the term has come down to us from the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. The late rhetorical critic Dionysius of Halicarnassus (first century A.D.) wrote a book *On Imitation,* a few fragments of which survive, and there provides formal definitions of both mimesis and emulation.

A note is not the place for a history of mimesis; a few high-points relevant to Longinus must suffice.

Homer does not use the word *mimesis* or its derivatives, but he does refer to activities that are mimetic, *e.g.,* the likeness which Apollo makes of Aeneas to deceive the Greeks (*Iliad* 5.449); the golden robots shaped like girls that help Hephaestus (*Iliad* 18.417 f.); and the Shield of Achilles. All of these are examples of visual mimesis.

Herodotus mentions "wooden paradigms of dead men" (2.86); the term "paradigm" becomes the most generic and inclusive term for the results of mimesis.

Plato, discussing Homer in the *Republic* 598 ff., says that what poets do is to make a work of art out of pictures, and he who practises mimesis is a maker of pictures. The words are very similar in the discussion of mimesis in the *Sophist* (265B, 267A-B).

Aristotle specifies three kinds of imitation (*Poetics* 1460b): things as they were or are; things as they are said or seem to be; things as they ought to be. And of the last—paradigms—he says (1461a13) "the paradigm ought to excel." We should observe that the "paradigm" is not the model which the artist imitates, but the imitation itself, as a computer is a "paradigm" of the human brain which, for the purposes for which it was designed, is superior to the human brain. Longinus uses the word "paradigm" in its more usual sense of "example" but the principle still obtains:

an example is a more perfect illustration of the point being discussed, and it is from this superiority that it derives its illustrative power.

In general, Greek literature and art preferred the ideal of the "type" (see ch. 20, n. on **vivid typical description**); what we call "realism" was an aim in only certain specialized genres, like the mime. The Greeks did not, however, ever stray far from what we call "representational" art; in the *Life of Apollonius* (2.22), Philostratus recounts a discussion between the sage Apollonius and his disciple Damis on the topic of mimesis. Apollonius takes up the representations which we see in clouds, *e.g.*, centaurs, and concludes that these are not God's art but chance, whereas human mimesis is deliberate and "rhythmic." Men by nature are mimetic, he says, but his works of painting and sculpture come from technique. Apollonius is well aware that the medium produces imitations different from reality—*e.g.*, using a white pencil to portray a black-skinned man—but the mimetic effect, he says would still be clear. Two chapters later, Apollonius indicates an awareness (ch. 24) of the non-representational art fashionable in the East, art he calls "symbolic."

In the definition from Dionysius of Halicarnassus, quoted next, Dionysius will say that mimesis is conducted according to theories. The natural question is, why are not all works of art successes which have been made in accordance with theories? Homer (so far as we can tell), Virgil, Dante, and Milton all seem to have worked according to theories in epic; Sophocles and Menander in tragedy and comedy. Is the answer that, in addition to theories, the artist must have divine inspiration, whether it come from "nature or a better god"? Longinus, who is fully aware of the problem (see chs. 2 and 8), offers his fragmentary observations.

The definition from Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Imitation*, fr. 28) gathers up many notions—medium, likeness, technique—into one definition: "mimesis is the activity of shaping the paradigms in accordance with theories." Such theories could come from (1) great models and paradigms; (2) ample time to observe them and work out the rules by which they were governed.

Longinus introduces the dual doctrine of imitation and emulation in this chapter, which is the one which deals most fully with Plato: the passage not only mentions Plato by name repeatedly, but also echoes his language (see above, n. on **flows on . . . without stirring a pebble**); and Longinus reaches a climax of mimetic allusion below (13.4), in the phrase "forming oneself after fine characters and molds and works of art" (see n. below). As usual, Longinus is himself imitating the virtue or vice which he is discussing. By mimetic emulation Longinus takes his place, as he encourages others to do, in what Russell calls (p. 113) "the sacred tradition": the great artists of the past are like bishops in the Christian church, who, in their handiwork, lay their hands on those who come after in esthetic succession. Such transmission is the result of both rites (mimesis) and spirit (emulation): the postulant must himself be receptive to his vocation, with an Apollonian enthusiasm.

The term "emulation" is given a brief history, as a social and cultural phenomenon, by Plato in the *Menexenus* (242A): Socrates says that, in the life of the polis, first came emulation and then begrudgement, both consequent on the

establishment of peace and prosperity. Once men had attained an orderly and complex civic life, the principle of "degree" or "hierarchy" or the "establishment" created ambition and emulation and envy.

Aristotle (*Rhet.* 1388a30) defines emulation thus: "a kind of pain at the visible existence of good things that are held in honor and that are possible for us to attain, possessed by those who are like us in nature; we feel this pain not because the other man has them but because we do not." His definition is a development of Plato's point in the *Menexenus;* it is more philosophically accurate than the one given by Dionysius (quoted next), but does not stress the elevating effect which Longinus and Dionysius perceive. Of course, Aristotle was distinguishing emulation from envy, whereas Dionysius is showing the relationship of emulation to mimesis.

Dionysius defines emulation in terms parallel to his definition of mimesis: "Emulation is an activity of the soul moved toward the wonder of that which seems to be fine" (*On Imitation,* fr. 28).

Dr. Johnson's remarks on imitation—without emulation—will help show how essential it is to have both (*Rambler* 154):

> No man ever yet became great by imitation. Whoever hopes for the veneration of mankind must have invention in the design or the execution; either the effect itself must be new, or the means by which it is produced. Either truths hitherto unknown must be discovered, or those which are already enforced by stronger evidence, facilitated by clearer method, or elucidated by brighter illustrations.

Johnson's development of the alternatives—invention in the design or in the execution—suggests that "new truths" are not apt to be discovered, at least not in art. And such was his prevailing view. Hence the artist had generally only the second way open to him. And in this direction lay all that the word "imitation" has come to mean in our day: fake. George Orwell reveals the ambiguous state of the word in his essay "Politics and the English Language": "Modern English, especially written English, is full of bad habits which spread by imitation and which can be avoided if one is willing to take the necessary trouble."

Imitation and emulation may, of course, discourage no less than incite. Longinus is at pains to overcome this "burden of the past," which W. Jackson Bate analyzes in his *The Burden of the Past and the English Poet* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1970). Ammianus Marcellinus, in the first century, describes this sense of oppression produced by the great cultural legacy of the past under which he and his age staggered (1.17.6-7):

> Emulation nourished genius, and now envy, now admiration incites imitation, and by nature what we sought with the utmost zeal ascends to the utmost, and staying in a state of perfection is difficult, and by nature what cannot advance recedes. And as at first we are incited to match those whom we think superior, thus—when we despair of being able to pass or equal them—zeal and expectation grow old together, and what is unable to match ceases to pursue, and—leaving the themes as if captured and occupied—seeks new themes.

Hume discusses emulation in Essay XIV in *On the Rise and Progress of the*

are divinely uplifted by another's spirit, in the same way that the story says the Pythian priestess approaches the tripod: there, where there is a rift in the earth, she breathes in a divine exhalation from the ground; standing on the same place, impregnated by the daemonic power, she at once begins to prophesy throughout the period of inspiration. In the same way, from the natural greatness of the ancients, as if out of holy orifices, kinds of effluences are carried into the souls of those emulating them; even those who are not given to the oracular and Apollonian are breathed into by these and become inspired by their greatness. 3. Was Herodotus alone thoroughly Homeric? Even before him Stesichorus and Archilochus, and, of all, Plato especially channelled off to himself thousands of such sluices from the Homeric stream. And perhaps we ought to have demonstrated this, if the school of

*Arts and Sciences:*

> If his [a man's] own nation be already possessed of many models of eloquence, he naturally compares his own juvenile exercises with these; and being sensible of the great disproportion, is discouraged from any further attempts, and never aims at a rivalship with those authors whom he so much admires. A noble emulation is the source of every excellence. Admiration and modesty naturally extinguish this emulation; and no one is so liable to an excess of admiration and modesty as a truly great genius.

Of Americans, John Adams most often discusses the power of emulation to excite genius. In *Discourse on Davila* (II) he writes:

> Every man not only desires the consideration of others, but he frequently compares himself with others, his friends or his enemies; and in proportion as he exults when he perceives that he has more of it than they, he feels a keener affliction when he sees that one or more of them, are more respected than himself.
>
> This passion, while it is simply a desire to excel another, by fair industry in search of truth, and the practice of virtue, is properly called *Emulation.*

**divine exhalation:** modern archaeology has discovered no sanction for this "vulgar error," widely held in later antiquity; Russell cites many passages alluding to the belief. Plutarch, who wrote an essay on the declining belief in oracles, does not accept the story.

**Herodotus . . . Homeric:** Herodotus is like Homer in his power to raise the emotions and in his descriptions, battle-scenes, digressions, dramatic speeches, concern for glory, dialect, diction, and rhythms. The late rhetoricians cite him often for many of these features.

**Stesichorus and Archilochus:** the work of these poets survives in fragments. Both adapted Homeric themes, stories, and diction to lyric poetry. For a deductive account of what their work was like, see Sir Maurice Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry.*

**Homeric stream:** Homer was regarded

Ammonius had not actually selected and compiled the references by species. 4. But there is no theft in the matter; rather, it is a type of forming one's work after fine characterizations or molds or works of art. And, in my opinion, Plato would not have reached such an acme in the doctrinal

as the father of everything, an idolatry which Plato mocks in his dialogue the *Ion*.

**Ammonius:** the successor of Aristarchus, the second century (B.C.) librarian and textual critic, who established the text of Homer still basically in use today; Ammonius wrote a book on Homer, now lost.

**by species:** we do not know what form the work of Ammonius took; the phrase "by species" suggests some kind of classification.

**theft:** the doctrine of mimesis naturally leads to the charge of plagiarism; Russell cites the German studies of the subject, which was much vexed in antiquity.

**fine characterizations . . . works of art:** the sequence is rhetorical rather than philosophical; "or" is more appositional than disjunctive. Longinus is here constructing a ladder or "climax" of his own in the sequence of nouns.

The word "character" or "characterization" is a technical term in rhetoric. Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1356a1 ff.) says that there are three species of proof in a speech: one of these is the character or characterization of the speaker. Hence the rhetorician will try to make his character appear good, since we trust good men in general, and especially in matters which are uncertain. The anonymous *Art of Rhetoric* (Spengel I.488) defines "character" as a disposition of the soul which has become inveterate and is hard to let go of, like that of a father for his sons. Hermogenes, in his book *On Ideas* (Spengel II.350), distinguishes between the "character" which fits appropriately with a particular part of a speech and that which goes through the whole speech, as color through the skin. Both uses employed by Hermogenes derive from Aristotle's analysis in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and in the *Rhetoric;* they correspond almost exactly to our word "characterization."

Longinus, then, is exploiting both the ordinary sense of the word and the technical rhetorical sense: because the great artists display their character in their work, character, or characterization, becomes a kind of work of art, for it is the result of certain techniques and repeated ways of doing something. Plato, of course, was a master of characterization, and his particular genre, the dialogue, was especially suited to characterization because of its close affinity to mime and comedy (see also ch. 9, n. on **emotion . . . characterization**).

The word "molds," another favorite term of Plato's, comes to be a rhetorical term for particular kinds of style.

The last word in the triad—"works of art"—is so special to Plato that its English derivative "demiurge" always refers either to Platonism or to neoplatonism. The word denotes the intermediate being—a kind of manifestation or *persona* of God—who imposes form on matter in accordance with the divine conceptions. The result of such activity

opinions of his philosophy, and he would not have kept pace with such poetic material and phrasing as we find in him, if he had not competed against Homer for the first prize with (by heaven) all his soul, like a youngster matching himself against a man whom all wonder at—though, perhaps, he was too much a lover of contention, and, as it were, of breaking lances—still, not without benefit. 5. According to Hesiod, you see, "This kind of strife is good for mortals." And the contest for glorious reputation is really a fine thing, and the crown is worthy of the victory in which being worsted by those born before you is not without glory.

is a "demiurged product" or work of art. Longinus uses the word one other time (43.5), where he advises the artist to imitate nature, who "demiurged man."

**doctrinal opinions:** the Greek word exists in transliteration in the English "dogma." The root-word is generally translated as "seem." Although commonly applied to all philosophical sects, Longinus uses the word only here; hence it may perhaps be one more jocular allusion to Platonic philosophy and its constant contrast between "seeming" and "being."

**competed against Homer:** Plato's "breaking lances" with Homer resulted in the famous expulsion of Homer and all poets from the ideal city (*Republic* 10). Sidney, who probably had not read Longinus, is at great pains in *The Defence of Poesie* to reconcile Plato's love and rejection of Homer.

**Hesiod:** *Works and Days* 24. Greek emphasis on competition as a means to excellence is Homeric: see the statement Glaucus makes to Diomedes in *Iliad* 6.208; it is the same line as 11.784, said by Peleus to Achilles. Homer's line was Cicero's favorite; Johnson thought it the noblest heathen sentiment (Boswell's *Life*, ed. Hill, II.149). We may compare Alfred North Whitehead's sentence, "Moral education is impossible apart from the habitual vision of greatness."

## Chapter 14

# Judgment of the Ancients

NOW, it is fine for us also, when we struggle over something which ought to have sublimity of address and greatness of mind, to mold in our souls how Homer would have said this same thing, if he had happened upon it, and how Plato and Demosthenes would have made it sublime, or Thucydides in history. You see, these persons, falling before our purview in our moment of emulation, and being conspicuously appropriate, will somehow carry up our souls to the standards which we have pictured for ourselves. 2. And still more, if we sketch this beforehand in our thoughts: how would Homer, if he were present, hear what I have spoken, or Demosthenes, and how would they have responded to it? You see, to undergo such a trial is, really, a great thing: to establish such a jury and theatre for our speeches and writings and to play at placing what we have

**persons:** the Greek word refers literally to that part of a man towards which you turn your look, *i.e.*, his face or countenance. By extension it comes to mean a mask worn in the Greek theatre, then a character in a play—exactly the meaning of *persona* in *dramatis personae*. In rhetoric the word refers to the molding or forming of characters. Plato's dialogues are excellent examples of such "person-making." Longinus' use of the word here suggests just such an imaginative effort by the artist, who is not only to create his work but is also to be a critical audience for it.

**how would they have responded to it:** Werner Jaeger kept a bust of Aristotle in his study; when asked whether he used it as Longinus advises here, he nodded and said that he did. Sir Joshua Reynolds, in the second of his *Discourses on Art,* discusses the value of copying for young artists:

> "Instead of copying the touches of those great masters, only copy their conceptions . . . . Consider with yourself how a Michael Angelo or a Raffaelle would have treated this subject; and work yourself into a belief that your picture is to be seen and criticized by them when completed. Even an attempt of this kind will rouse your powers."

Benedict Einarson's translation of Longinus includes Reynolds' *Discourses,* which throughout show the great influence of Longinus on the eighteenth century. Keats kept a miniature of Shakespeare with him, and Ficino burnt a candle before a bust of Plato; Erasmus' humanistic prayer is justly famous: "Saint Socrates, pray for us."

**play:** editors generally mark a crux at the verb "play at," on the grounds that "there is no reason to suppose that it can

written under the audit of such heroes as our judges and witnesses. 3. And a greater stimulus than these provide will come if you ask in addition: "These things which I am writing—how will the ages after me hear them?" But if one be afraid to say something which will survive past the due date of his own life and time, it must be that the conceptions of the man's soul are blind and, as it were, abortive—not carried to the final birth which brings later fame.

mean 'pretend that,' as the sense requires" (Russell). But an exact parallel exists in the text (3.2), where Longinus says that "paratragic" and ranting poets are, in their own opinion, genuinely enthusiastic and possessed of a Dionysiac inspiration, but are really only "playing at" it. The root of the Greek verb for "play" is the word "boy," and boys love to play at being serious—sometimes playing so hard that they believe their fantasies to be real. Pretense, like affectation, often becomes a second nature. Such pretending is no good if it does not convey a sense of reality, just as an actor must "live" his part.

**witnesses:** Longinus here modulates his image from a theatre to a courtroom: Greek theatrical productions were competitive and had "judges." Witnesses are among the kinds of proof. Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1375b26 ff.) divides witnesses into two classes, one of which he calls "the ancients." These, he says, are the poets and past heroes whose "decisions" are known to us. Longinus is playing on these various meanings, for the ancient authorities to which we appeal in this courtroom-theatre of cultural judgment are at once judges by their standards and witnesses by their works of what is authentic and true.

**past the due date:** the term in Greek is a legal one denoting something owed past the date due; the term thus continues the metaphor begun by "witnesses" (see preceding note).

**blind . . . later fame:** the image is consistently of conception and birth; such imagery is dominant in Plato, *e.g.*, the *Symposium* and the *Theaetetus*, where Socrates compares himself at length to a midwife assisting in the birth of ideas. "Blind" is used of plants without buds and of abortive births (Themistius, cited by Russell).

## Chapter 15

# Images

IN addition, young man, images also contribute to boldness and greatness of address and courtroom pleading; thus some speak of making pictures: though every sort of conception which gives birth to a speech or writing (no matter how it affects the soul) is commonly called an image, it has now become the vogue to use the word whenever, as a result of enthusiasm and emotion, you think you are gazing at what you are describing and you set it in the sight of those who hear you. 2. Thus it would not escape your notice that rhetorical imagery wishes to be one thing, that of the poets another, nor that the final end of poetry is the astounding of those

**images:** Russell translates "visualization." Prickard and Grube render the term "imagination." Roberts, Fyfe, Einarson, and Dorsch all use "images." Sir John Sandys remarks that "in the sense of 'creative imagination' we have to wait for more than five centuries till we find it in Philostratus" (*A History of Classical Scholarship*. Cambridge, England, 1906. Volume 1, p. 72.).

**sight:** Longinus carefully follows Aristotle here (*Poetics* 1455a22): "One ought to establish plots and work them out together with the style as far as possible with [the situation] set before his eyes. By seeing things very clearly and vividly he will find what is appropriate."

Quintilian, in dealing with the emotions, equates the word here translated as "images" with the Latin *visio*. To make the audience see what is not actually there the orator must himself see it first, which he does by means of images created from his ability to daydream and to fantasize. We may compare E. K.'s gloss on Spenser's *November* eclogue in *The Shepheardes Calendar*, where Spenser writes: "I see thee, blessed soule, I see," and E. K. says, "a lively icon or representation, as if he saw her in heaven present."

**astounding:** a synonym for "ecstasy." It is that which "knocks you out" (Russell). Such impact results from situations which are by nature fantastic or horrible, either as direct sensory experiences (*e.g.*, the picture of Furies in the last part of the *Oresteia*) or of a sudden recognition of such a situation (see Aristotle's *Poetics* 1454a4), where he says that such recognition is better, since then there is nothing disgusting. Since the effect can be produced by direct sensation, it can also be produced by images of such sensations and experiences; to do so is one of the principal jobs of the public speaker.

In distinguishing the jobs of poetry and rhetoric on this point, Longinus is recognizing that the two are overlapping spheres. Poetry can often afford to let its image be more powerful than the original experience, but the public speaker is generally tied to a more realis-

who hear it, but in speeches and writings a clear envisioning; all the same, you see, both are seeking [the sublime and emotional] and the state of sympathetic excitement.

> O Mother, I beseech you, do not release
> The maids of eyes of blood, of hair of snakes:
> For they, the maids themselves, are here leaping upon me!

and

> Woe's me! He slays me. Where am I to flee?

Here the poet himself sees the Furies, and he has almost compelled those hearing him to see what he has made an image of. 3. Now Euripides is the one who most loves to toil at utterly tragicizing these two emotions—

tic and less theatrical scene. Later in this chapter, Longinus mildly censures Hyperides for letting his rhetorical image become too powerful and thus call attention to itself.

**clear envisioning:** The anonymous *Art of Rhetoric* (Spengel I.439) says that "clear envisioning" works together with emotion in producing persuasion, and defines it in words similar to those used here by Longinus. The artist or rhetorician achieves it by molding and forming.

[**the sublime and the emotional**]: editors agree that there is a slight lacuna here. One may add either "the sublime" or "the emotional" or both.

**O Mother . . . leaping upon me:** The lines quoted come from the mad-scene in Euripides' *Orestes* (255-57), a scene extremely popular in antiquity. Except perhaps in certain kinds of epideictic writing, such language is out of place in prose, and even in the prose-threnody it quickly becomes rant and "paratragic." Longinus is about to make this criticism of contemporary public speakers, who were beginning to indulge too much in such language.

Addison, in *Spectator* 44, contrasts the effect of "spectacle" with the effect produced by speech: his example is parallel to the one which Longinus cites from Euripides: Hamlet addressing the ghost of his father on the battlements. Addison remarks that he does not censure the use of props and stage-devices "when they are introduced with skill and accompanied by proportional sentiments and expressions in the writing."

**Woe's me . . . to flee:** the quotation is from Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Taurus* (291). As ancient critics frequently refer to a whole speech or passage simply by the opening line, readers should consult the speech as a whole and its dramatic context.

**most loves . . . at tragicizing:** Aristotle (*Poetics* 1453a30) admits that Euripides

madness and erotic passion—and in these (I don't know whether it is true in other things) he is most lucky; but in fact he does not lack boldness in applying himself to other images also. Though, of course, he has very little natural greatness, still he has compelled his nature to become tragic, and in each of his great moments, as the poet Homer says, he

> With tail lashing his flanks and loins
> On both sides, he girds himself for battle.

is deficient in the organization of his plays but says that, on the stage, he appears to be the "most tragic" because he deals with those who suffer powerful emotions.

Although Longinus specifies "erotic passions," and although such examples as Phaedra and Medea were justly famous, he cites only passages showing madness. Erotic passion, one may presume, would be a form of weak emotion, and hence would lend itself less well to the sublime. That Longinus is not sure about the potential sublimity of such characters as Phaedra and Medea is made clear by his phrase "I don't know." Having granted in ch. 10 that Sappho was able to be sublime in treating erotic passion, he cannot simply rule out Euripides' treatment of the same thing—though we may imagine that he might make a distinction on the basis of genre: lyric as distinct from tragedy.

**Now Euripides . . . images also:** Dionysius of Halicarnassus is similar: in his fragmentary work *On Imitation* (6) he says that Euripides is rhetorical in his words—but often from "much greatness" falls into empty prettiness . . . and lowness—and is not sublime.

Addison seems to echo this passage in his remarks on the tragedian Otway:

> Otway has followed nature in the language of his tragedy, and therefore shines in the passionate parts, more than any other of our English poets. As there is something familiar and domestic in the fable of his tragedy, more than in those of any other poet, he has little pomp, but great force, in his expressions. For which reason, though he has admirably succeeded in the tender and melting part of his tragedies, he sometimes falls into too great a familiarity of phrase in those parts which, by Aristotle's rule, ought to have been raised by the dignity of expression.

**the poet Homer says:** the quotation is from the *Iliad* (20.170 f.). It describes Achilles, as he rages on the field to avenge Patroclus, just before his meeting with Aeneas. We may compare the soliloquy delivered by Hamlet (II.ii), in which he contrasts the factitious frenzy of the actor with his own authentic motivation:

> Is it not monstrous that this player here,
> But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
> Could force his soul so to his own conceit
> That from her working all his visage wanned,
> Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect . . .

4. Now, when the Sun presented the reins to Phaethon, he declares:

> Choose not to drive yourself upon the Libyan sky:
> Its climate is not moist; it will let down your chariot.

and, most consistently:

> "Go now, holding your course to the seven Pleiades."
> So much the boy had heard, the reins he seized.
> He struck the winged horses on the sides and
> Let them go. And the mares to the folds of ether flew.
> On the back of Sirius, the father rode
> To give advice to him: "Direct it here—
> Turn the car there—there."

Would you not say that the soul of the writer steps up into the chariot with the boy and, sharing the danger with him, wings its way with the horses? You see, if he were not equally carrying himself in those celestial travels, he would never have made such images. His lines on Cassandra are similar:

> Trojans, lovers of horses. . .

5. And Aeschylus is audacious for very heroic images, just as in his *Seven Against Thebes* he says:

**he declares:** Euripides, in a lost play, the *Phaethon;* a number of fragments survive. The lines are said by a messenger who is describing the scene which takes place between Helios and his son and the subsequent rise and fall of the boy. Failure to observe the mean is the boy's vice, as well as that of both Euripides and the public speakers at whom Longinus is pointing.

**and, most consistently:** such passages are, of course, ones in which Euripides is successful. Longinus displays considerable tact and wit in manipulating his various points: to praise and censure Euripides, to select passages which show him at his best, and simultaneously to use these to show the kind of thing that will work in poetry but not in oratory. Perhaps, in this picture of the anxious but futile Helios, Longinus is figuring his own effect on his contemporaries.

**on Cassandra:** we do not know with certainty what play this comes from. Presumably the passage was famous enough so that Longinus needed to do no more than allude to it briefly in this fashion.

**in his *Seven Against Thebes* he says:** the lines come from Aeschylus' play (42-46). The passage serves a double function: 1)

Heroes, seven in all, each a swift captain at arms,
Bull slaughterers on a black-rimmed shield,
Who dipping their hands in a bulls' death swear an oath
By Ares and Enyo and by Fear, who lusts for blood,

having sworn with each other ("without lamentation") their own death—though sometimes Aeschylus brings in thoughts that are not worked out and are, as it were, like raw and untreated wool, all the same Euripides actually makes himself approach such dangers because of his love of esteem. 6. While in Aeschylus the royal palace of Lycurgus, during the epiphany of Dionysus, is divinely carried aloft in a manner contrary to opinion:

it is an instance of how Aeschylus manages to be vivid in heroic material, in a way which Euripides could not manage; 2) it describes Aeschylus himself, as the passage describing the lion (10.3) had been used to describe contemporary orators or as the "paratragic" quotation in 3.2 was used to describe the ranting tragedian.

**having sworn . . . their own:** this clause modifies the seven heroes, and itself contains a further quotation from the passage in Aeschylus ("without lamentation"). The emotion found in lamentation is low and vulgar, according to Longinus (see ch. 8).

**raw and untreated wool:** the image is drawn from the process of preparing wool; Aeschylus' style is seen, on occasion, as rough, shaggy, hairy, discolored, unfinished. Longinus seems to have been alone in using the word metaphorically.

**all the same:** that is, even having the example of Aeschylus' failure in front of him, and knowing that Aeschylus failed sometimes in material for which his nature was unsuited, Euripides forces his unsuited nature to try the same kind of heroic imagery. Observe that Longinus does not credit Euripides with "emulation" here, but "love of esteem."

**epiphany:** the English "appearance" is too weak. In Greek, the noun is very often used of deities as they manifest themselves. In late writers the noun denotes the sudden and unexpected appearance of an enemy; hence its use here serves Longinus as a transition from the military passages, just used to compare Aeschylus and Euripides, to religious imagery used to compare the two poets.

In English critical writing (as distinct from theology), the word "epiphany" figures importantly in the aesthetic theory worked out by Aquinas in ch. v of Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.*

**divinely carried aloft:** Such "divine madness" might be truly inspired, but, if not controlled by art and technique, it could fail, as the quotations from Aeschylus and Euripides are designed to show. Longinus balances his praise and blame neatly.

**contrary to opinion:** from the Greek

Enthusiastic is the house, bacchant the roof,

Euripides gave voice to the same idea in another way, making it pleasing:

The mountain, a bacchant with them.

7. And Sophocles reached a height of imagery in Oedipus' dying and burying himself, with a kind of divine expression, and in Achilles' appearance from his tomb before the Greeks at their sailing away—a scene which I do not know anyone has more clearly envisioned than Simonides. But I

word we derive our "paradoxical," that is, contrary to general opinion or to what seems to be true. We may compare such passages as Milton's closing lines in the *Epitaphium Damonis* or the famous passage in Isaiah (55.12):

. . . the mountains and the hills
before you
shall break forth into singing,
and all the trees of the field shall
clap their hands.

**Enthusiastic . . . roof:** Aeschylus (fr. 58, Nauck), from a lost play.

**making it pleasing:** *i.e.,* a "pleasing touch." Longinus seems to have felt that Aeschylus was too bold in his metaphors, as some critics feel about such metaphors in the Bible as the mountains that skip like lambs. He is on the edge of formulating a distinction between "personification" and Ruskin's "pathetic fallacy." William Smith remarks that Milton "shews a greater boldness of diction than either Euripides or Aeschylus, and tempers it with the utmost propriety, when, at Adam's eating the forbidden fruit,"

Earth trembled from her entrails,
as again
In pangs, and nature gave a second
groan:
Sky lowr'd, and mutt'ring thunder, some sad drops
Wept, at completing of the mortal
sin.

*Paradise Lost* IX.1000-03

Longinus would, perhaps, have approved of Milton's boldness for the same reason that he approves of Euripides: the close linking of the internal psychic movement—the emotion—with the external symbol—what T. S. Eliot calls "the objective correlative."

**with a kind of divine expression:** the phrase probably goes with Oedipus, but it can also refer to Sophocles' art. The reference is to the closing scene—done by means of a messenger's speech, in the *Oedipus at Colonus.* Both this and the passage from Aeschylus quoted in 10.5 are from messengers' speeches; these would naturally be passages closely resembling the topics and situations available to public speakers, as in the passage cited from Demosthenes (10.7), which Longinus praises highly.

**Simonides:** perhaps in the lost work *Polyxena;* cf. fr. 52 (Page). Euripides describes the scene in *The Trojan Women* and the *Hecuba.* Longinus' choice of Simonides would seem to be an indirect censure of Euripides.

have no mechanism for setting down all examples. 8. But though in fact the images found in the poets have a way of going beyond what is mythic and of entirely transcending our sense of what is credible, in rhetoric the images are always best that are practical and correspond to the truth. And the digressions are strange and abnormal when the cast of the speech or writing is poetic or mythic and falls into all kinds of impossible things, as now, heaven knows, even our most powerful public speakers gaze on

Simonides is praised by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Imitations* 6) for his "selection of words," his "precision of *synthesis*," and for his power to evoke a sense of lamentation, not in a way appropriate to greatness, but emotionally. Longinus classifies "lamentation" as one of the emotions which are separate from sublimity and low (8.2).

**abnormal:** in the word "abnormal," Longinus points to the kind of "display" favored by his contemporaries, an imitation of tragedy in prose, where such language and emotion were not suitable. Longinus regarded his work as useful for men in political life (1.2); such excesses would be out of place, as Ovid discovered when he switched from his incipient political career to poetry.

**as now:** the phrase "as now" suggests that a growing tendency among lesser orators has now become prevalent. Longinus is referring to Asianism.

The founder of this later "Asianism" (earlier, "Asianism" was, according to Philostratus [*Lives of the Sophists* 509], introduced by Aeschines [397c.-322 B.C.]) was (again, according to Philostratus) Nicetes of Smyrna, who lived in the second half of the first century A.D. Tacitus (*Dialogue on Orators* 13) remarks that Nicetes went far beyond Aeschines. Nicetes, says Philostratus (*Lives of the Sophists* 511), found rhetoric in reduced straits and made it glorious by "stepping away from" the ancient political mode of public speaking and substituting sophistic devices and a "bacchic and dithyrambic" mode. The distinction is like that which Aristotle makes (*Poetics* 1450b7) between the older tragedians, who made their characters speak "politically" and the newer crop, whose characters speak "rhetorically." Throughout Philostratus, one can observe the popularity of this Asiatic or inspired mode; and such extant orations as the late monody delivered by Himerius (very late) on his son display the vices of the mode. Scopelian, the pupil of Nicetes, was another extravagant Asianist and was exceedingly popular. If Longinus wrote in the first century A.D., such rhetoricians as Nicetes and Scopelian would have been in his mind when he composed this passage.

Quintilian, writing toward the end of the century, describes the mad appearance of such speakers at length, and with sober reproof (2.12.9-10); his picture is very like that of Lucian, writing over half a century later. The trend toward such gesticulatory Asianism was clearly in full force by the end of the first century. In the second century, there occurred such a recrudescence of Asianism as to allow Philostratus to mark it as one of his three divisions in the history of rhetoric (*Lives of the Sophists* 511).

Furies—just like tragedians—and they—noble fellows—are not capable of learning that when Orestes says

> Let go! You are one of my Erinyes;
> You are holding me around my waist to cast me into
> Hell,

he is making these images because he is mad. 9. Now what is rhetorical imagery able to accomplish? It is equally able to bring into our speeches and writings what is characteristic of the courtroom and what is emotional, and when joined with attempts at practical arguments, it not only persuades the audience, it also enslaves it. Demosthenes says:

**Orestes says:** from Euripides' *Orestes* (264-65). Longinus returns to his point—that contemporary orators are too poetic—by quoting from the same play and same scene, with which he began. He is fond of quoting passages which mention Furies and Bacchants; but of course they were the normal examples of madness and daemonic inspiration.

**he is mad:** Longinus ends his criticism of contemporary oratory with a sting: the word for "he is mad" refers to the contemporary orators no less than to Orestes. The whole criticism looks back to the comments on "ranting" and the "paratragic" in ch. 3. Hermogenes, in his book *On the Method for the Powerful* (Spengel II.453), has a section dealing with the "tragic mode of speaking." Homer invented it, he says, and Demosthenes imitated it. What it could degenerate into may be seen in the very late prose-threnody of Himerius referred to above in the note **"as now."**

**practical arguments:** Longinus returns to his practical aim of helping those who intend a political career: the word translated "practical arguments" is a rhetorical term denoting a subdivision of the genus "proof" as used in speeches, especially those in lawsuits, where "facts" count.

Longinus does not wish to exclude emotion from practical oratory but to make it serve a function; having shown in the previous paragraphs what its excess can do to corrupt, he now wishes to show what its proper use can do to enhance. That use is tremendous, as he shows by his word "enslaves."

**persuades . . . enslaves:** the contrast is very strong. In ch. 1.4 Longinus had contrasted the state of being persuaded with "ecstasy"; here he uses the notion of being "enslaved"—*i.e.*, "enthralled"—as his contrasting term. The sublime and stunning may push us "up" or "outside" or "down"; so long as they move us suddenly and strikingly to some place other than that which we usually occupy, the effect will—logically—be the same. For example, whether one stands at the bottom of the Grand Canyon looking up, or at the top looking down, one experiences the same sense of grandeur. The ancients expressed this awareness by using the same word for "high" and "deep." St. Paul uses the image of "enslavement"

> Only if at this very moment someone were to hear shouting in front of the courtroom, and then if someone were to say, "There's been a jailbreak and the prisoners are escaping," nobody young or old is so careless that he wouldn't run to give as much help as possible. And if someone should come in and actually say, "He's the one who let them loose," he would, without a trial, be killed right on the spot.

10. Thus (by heaven) Hyperides also, on being accused, when after the defeat he voted for freeing the slaves, said:

> It was not the speaker who brought this to a vote; it was the battle of Chaeronea.

You see, the public speaker here has simultaneously tried his hand at a practical argument and made an image; therefore he has exceeded the limit of persuasiveness in the point being taken up. 11. But somehow by nature in all such things we hear what is stronger; as a result we are dragged away from demonstrative arguments and are astounded by the image, by the dazzle of which the practical argument is hidden. And it is not unlikely that we should feel this: you see, when two things are arranged together, the stronger over and over again draws off to itself the capacity of the weaker. 12. So much will suffice for what is sublime in the faculty of conception and for what greatness of mind creates from mimesis or imagery.

everywhere to express his sense of transcendent submission.

**Demosthenes says:** the passage comes from his speech *Against Timocrates* (24.208).

**Hyperides . . . said:** from a lost speech (fr. 28, Kenyon). Hyperides was accused of having introduced an unconstitutional motion when he proposed to enfranchise slaves after the disaster at Chaeronea. We may observe that Longinus is keeping up his motif of "slaves and freedom." He is also distinguishing between Demosthenes and Hyperides by quoting parallel passages, in preparation for his comparison of them in ch. 34. And his quotation supports the general point of the chapter, in which he cautions orators against letting the poetic oratorical devices become more important than the actual case or political situation.

**So much will suffice:** Longinus has now finished the first two of the five divisions listed at the beginning of ch. 8. Russell objects to the specific omission in Longinus' summary of the word "emotion," which has appeared in ch. 8, but Longinus had qualified the word

"emotion" there by the adjective "enthusiastic," and such had been the topic of the last few chapters. The two great lacunae which occur between chs. 8 and 15 prevent us from knowing what transitions Longinus may have made. Still, the general outline is clear: after the prospectus given in ch. 8, Longinus begins with "greatness of mind" (9.2), the word used to introduce the second part of his summary in 15.12. Ch. 10 is a continuation of ch. 9, as the opening sentence makes clear: in ch. 10 Longinus is dealing with the relationship between the nature of the material and the artist's nature. Chapters 11 and 12 are a further continuation, for "development" is closely allied to what immediately precedes, as Longinus says at the start of ch. 11. Chapters 13 and 14 introduce a new topic, that of imitation; ch. 15 deals with imagery. Longinus' summary in 15.12, then, is accurate: "what is sublime in conception" is covered in chapters 9-12; "greatness in nature"—which is allied with "what is sublime in conception" by being a natural gift—is covered in chapters 13-15.

Longinus will now turn to the next three categories listed in ch. 8, those which can be attained by a combination of nature and technique.

## Chapter 16

# Oaths

HERE is the place where figures are arranged in order; you see, these—if they are handled as they ought to be—would not (as I said) be a

**figures:** these are the "figures of speech"; see ch. 8, n. on **figures** for the formal definition. Longinus does not discuss all the various "figures" classified by the rhetoricians. He exercises upon the subject matter that power of selection which he discussed in ch. 10, and the principle of selection is constant: does the figure enable the speaker to convey his emotion to the audience so that they have a kind of communion with him? Such communion, sympathetic excitement, co-enthusiasm constitute his steady criteria. The subject of "figures" is vexed: Russell's note on ch. 16 summarizes the difficulties.

The rhetorical handbooks tend to agree that "figure" pertains to an inversion of syntax or "the way things are put together," "trope," or "turn of mannerism" to inversions of individual words. The very idea of "inversion"—as Russell points out—rests on the assumption that there is a "natural" way of saying things; and this assumption in turn rests on the question of usage and evolution in language. Is an idiom, for example, a way of saying something which is congenital or historical in a language?

There might not be just one right way to do or say something, but there were wrong ways. In ch. 5 of his book *On Composition,* Dionysius of Halicarnassus recounts his wrestlings with the problem. We quote from Rhys Roberts' translation:

> Well, my notion was that we ought to follow mother nature to the utmost, and to link together the parts of speech according to her promptings. For example, I thought I must place nouns before verbs: the former, you see, indicate the substance, the latter the accident, and in the nature of things the substance takes precedence of its accidents [such was Hobbes' view, and it controlled his style] . . . The principle is attractive but I came to the conclusion that it was not sound.

Dionysius got into difficulty, of course, because he took too narrow a conception of nature, one based solely on physics and metaphysics; and nature—even when "methodiz'd," as Pope puts it—is more various and flexible than metaphysics. It is still not without rules and theories, but these rules and theories must be in accordance with the subject matter.

Longinus, and the ancient critics in general, believed that "nature" was constant, although perhaps not immutable, a view embraced by all who are classical or neoclassical in their thinking. Pope's doctrine (*Essay on Criticism* I.68-69) is the *locus classicus* in English:

> First follow Nature, and your judgment frame
> By her just standard, which is still

the same.

The doctrine of nature's constancy underlies all of western civilization, despite the temporary dislocation of, and consequent readjustment in, the history of science by such notable phenomena as Darwin's theory of evolution and Einstein's theory of relativity. Even if change—whether progress or its obverse, degeneration—be the law of nature, it is change according to law. Such is the message of Spenser's *Mutability Cantos* and Whitehead's *Process as Reality*. When Hamlet wished to "hold the mirror up to nature," he knew that there would be something for the mirror to reflect, and that man could see it. What Hamlet wanted art to do, Bacon wished for science. Tennyson's line "The old order changeth, giving way to the new" is a recognition that the stuff of things is fluid, not that there is not order. All art and all science is based on the *de facto* and *de jure* assumption that nature is orderly even in its apparent randomness and chaos.

If, then, nature be a process of constancy, language itself, whether it be a divine or human institution, is a part of nature. Longinus was not naive, and he saw as well as we can, that language had certain constant formulations against which variations could be played off. In English, for example, such a powerful mixture of barbarism and solecism as "Is you is or is you ain't my baby" relies for its power on a norm which no amount of evolution can change: the concept of person and plurality, to say nothing of the emotional situation which underlies the syntax.

The Greek word for "figure" comes from the verb meaning "to have, to hold"; the English "figure" comes from the Latin *fingo*, which means "to shape, to give form to"—it is the same word as "fiction." Since the phrase "figure of speech" is now domesticated in English as a translation of the Greek word, we have chosen to retain it. The reader, however, should keep in mind that the Greek word for "figure" always suggests (a) the outward appearance in shape or form of something; (b) such a "something" could be the ancient atom—which was immutable—or the ancient dancer, who was fluid as a whole but who, in his fluidity, adopted "figures" or "positions," like a modern ballet dancer. The dancer's "figure" was what he "held on to." What the "stuff" underlying the fluidity of form be is a metaphysical question, embodied in antiquity in such diverse forms as the myth of Proteus and Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.

Language, then, had a natural norm, but could also, because of its fluid and plastic and fictive nature, take on shapes or figures. We should observe that Longinus employs the phrase (in 16.2, just below) "the natural usage"; and such a phrase implies the opposite, "the usage contrary to nature." Just as in our modern notion of a fluid nature operating within certain analyzable and hence fixed laws, the Greeks saw language as operating variously and yet within norms. Variations from the norm were called "figures" and "turns of mannerisms"; excessive variations were called "barbarisms" and "solecisms"—what we call "malapropisms," "illiteracies," or (more generally) "not idiomatic" or "not English."

**(as I said):** the reference is to ch. 7, where Longinus specifically outlines the topics which he is taking up in order.

small part of greatness. But since to be thoroughly precise about all of them would be a big job at present—rather, a limitless one—for the sake of confirming what was laid down before, I shall actually go through a few—as many as contribute to greatness in address. 2. Demosthenes brings in a demonstration on behalf of his political positions. What would have been natural usage?

**a big job . . . limitless one:** the phrase "a big job" recalls Aristotle's quailing at the notion of having to write a complete history of the origin of tragedy (*Poetics* 1449a30), where he uses the same phrase; the phrase "a limitless one" resembles the one Alexander uses, in his book *On Figures* (Spengel III.9), when he remarks that some say the number of figures is "without limit."

**a few:** Longinus selects, in chs. 16 through 29, from the numerous and often hair-splitting distinctions made by the later rhetoricians. He accepts—as not all did—the distinction between "figures of thought" and "figures of speech," and deals with "figures of thought" first.

It will be easiest to grasp the distinction if we start with a "figure of speech": "Only through time is time conquered" (T. S. Eliot, *Burnt Norton*). The line achieves some degree of power from the repetition and juxtaposition of the word "time." If we reverse the clauses, we lose this figure of speech, although the idea remains: Time is conquered only through time. Incidentally, we now have a new figure, that called the "circle," in which a sentence begins and ends with the same word.

In a figure of thought, changes in word-order do not affect the rhetorical cast of the idea expressed. For example, in Frost's distich *Precaution*, we find that a reversal of the lines does not affect the sense, although the impact is altered: "I never dared be radical when young/ For fear I should be conservative when old." And as we can alter the word-order and the order of the lines, so, too, we can alter the words and retain the idea, as for example: In my youth I lacked the temerity to engage in ultra-liberal activities/Because of my apprehension that I might in later years be a reactionary. Or, to take an example of what the rhetoricians called "metastasis": "It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves" (Psalms 100). Once again, change in the word-order or even the words can be made and the sense will remain.

Among the various figures of thought listed by the rhetorical handbooks are irony, paraleipsis (*praeteritio*), and allegory; but there was much argument about the whole question. Alexander, in *On Figures*, reviews the various theories (Spengel III.11-14); he concludes that the natural speech of men often contains figures of thought, but these are only to be called so when they are deliberate.

**Demosthenes brings in . . . natural usage:** the passage from Demosthenes (18.208) was a *locus classicus* even in classical times: Russell cites many of those who admired it. For the ethical and philosophical problem implied in the phrase "natural usage," see n. on **figures** above. Longinus' point requires that both this quotation and the one

> You have not made a mistake, you who have taken up the struggle on behalf of Greek freedom. You have examples that are at home with this, for those at Marathon did not make a mistake, nor those at Salamis or Plataea.

But indeed, as if he had suddenly been inspired by a divinity and, as it were, had been taken over by Apollo, he gave voice to his oath, swearing by the most excellent men of Greece—

> It is not possible that you were mistaken—by those who faced the danger at Marathon—

In this one figure the oath (which I call apostrophe) he made divinities of

following be taken together, since the rhetorical device being analyzed is the "oath." In a rhetorical maneuvre of his own, Longinus splits the passage into two parts in order to emphasize the power of the oath.

Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1375a22) classifies oaths as the last of five kinds of proof which are "without technique," that is, the speaker does not invent them; the five are laws, witnesses, contracts, torture, and oaths. In 1377a8 ff., Aristotle lists four subdivisions of the category *oaths;* that used by Demosthenes would fall under the subdivision "taking an oath without asking the opponent to take one also."

In the later rhetoricians, the oath was classified as a figure based on character rather than practical argument. Hermogenes, in his book *On the Method for Powerful Effects* (Spengel II.442-43), briefly traces the development of this "idea" from Homer through Plato to Demosthenes.

Oaths in this sense are not a common part of English idiom. Henn (p. 39) cites an oath from *King John* (V.ii): "By all the blood that ever fury breathed." Macaulay, in his *Lays of Ancient Rome* and Kipling in some of his short stories have experimented with oaths, but they generally rely on pagan and foreign deities for their effects.

The problem is dramatized by Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet* (II.ii):

> *Romeo:* Lady, by yonder blessed moon I vow . . .
> *Juliet:* Oh, swear not by the moon . . .
> *Romeo:* What shall I swear by?
> *Juliet:* Do not swear at all. Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
> Which is the god of my idolatry,
> And I'll believe thee.

In *King John* (I.i), the Bastard tells his mother that he knows he is a bastard and asks her who his real father is; his mother, in horror, exclaims: "Hast thou denied thyself a Faulconbridge?" To this the Bastard replies with an oath more ingenious than powerful: "As faithfully as I deny the Devil."

**swearing by:** the quotation is a continuation of that just quoted. As usual,

his ancestors, and stirred us to swear as if they were divinities, and he put into the souls of the judges a sense of those who risked danger for Athens, and he changed the nature of a demonstrative argument into a surpassing sublimity and emotion and a proof worthy of those strange oaths that go beyond nature, and simultaneously he sent his speech into the souls of those hearing like some antidote and cure, so that his hearers, lightened by the encomia, are made to take their stand and think themselves no less in fighting against Philip than they were at their victory prizes at Marathon and Salamis; in all of this his point of departure is the figure, having caught up his audience with him. 3. And certainly, they say, the seed of the oath is found in Eupolis:

> By the fight at Marathon,
> No one will take joy in giving my heart an ache.

But it is no great thing for anyone to swear by anything at all; what is most important is where and how and at what critical moment and for what purpose. But though in Eupolis there is nothing except the oath—made

when Longinus wishes to speak of good inspiration, he gives credit to Apollo rather than to Dionysus.

**apostrophe:** the use of this word as a technical term in rhetoric is apparently very late; LSJ lists as its earliest source Philodemus, first century B.C. The word appears frequently in Quintilian and in later rhetorical theorists, but none uses the word as Longinus does.

"Apostrophe" is a figure; it had a basic sense—a speech diverting attention from the *persona* of the judge, but also had many variations, all of which involve a "turning away" from the subject being discussed or from the person being addressed to something else. Some very late rhetoricians (*e.g.*, the anonymous scholia on Hermogenes' *On Ideas*, Walz VII.978) distinguish between "apostrophe" and "hypostrophe," the first referring to persons, the second to things.

Examples of such "turning away" are generally found in sudden appeals made from the adversary to the judge, from the judge to the adversary, from the adversary to some piece of evidence or to some possession of his, from any one of these to the gods. Quintilian extends the figure to allow for diversion of attention or for simulated expectation. Yet despite this liberal interpretation, Longinus' extension of the term is unique, as he himself is aware: "which very things I call 'apostrophe.'" Longinus is claiming to see a new extension or form of the figure: not simply shifting from the person or subject to the gods, but combining such a shift with apotheosis. Since no later rhetorician seems to discuss this classification, we may assume that it was not only orginal but also still-born—the fate of his work as a whole in antiquity.

**in Eupolis:** from a lost play by the comic poet Eupolis, entitled *Demoi* (fr.

when the Athenians still had good luck and did not need exhortatory address, the poet did not make men deathless in his oath so that he might implant in those who heard him a speech worthy of their excellence, but he wandered away from those who risked danger to something without a soul—a fight. In Demosthenes the oath is practical, made to those who had been worsted, so that Chaeronea should no longer seem to the Athenians a misfortune; and at the same time, as I said, the very same oath is a demonstration that they have not made a mistake—it is an example, a proof, an encomium, an encouragement. 4. And since someone might confront the speaker, saying—

> Do you talk of defeat when you have made the policy,
> and then do you swear an oath by victories?—

because of this he consistently regulates and safely leads his words, teaching

90, Kock), in which Eupolis brought back the ghosts of ancient Athenian heroes like Pericles, Solon, and Miltiades to speak; these lines were spoken by Miltiades. The words are a parody of the *Medea* 389 ff. by Euripides. In the comments which Longinus makes on the notion that Demosthenes "borrowed" from Eupolis, he displays literary criticism at its highest. Not for him the kind of mechanical source-hunting—clearly common in his day—which later led Tennyson to remark that if he used the phrase "blue sky," the critics would accuse him of taking "blue" from Shelley and "sky" from Keats.

**still had good luck:** Eupolis' play was produced in 412, after the disastrous Sicilian expedition. It is for this reason that Russell questions Longinus' phrase "good luck." Perhaps, though, in comparison with the situation after Chaeronea, even the disaster in Sicily was not overwhelming, for Athens was so strong she was not defeated until eight years after her defeat in Sicily.

**a fight:** since the rhetorical device of the oath is not a feature of modern oratory, the point which Longinus makes is not dramatically clear: the speaker in Eupolis' play swears by the battle—an inanimate thing; Demosthenes swears by the men who fought there and who achieved an immortal glory, which, in part, Demosthenes gives them by his oath.

**an example, a proof, an encomium, an encouragement:** all four words are technical terms in rhetoric. The "example" is defined in the handbooks as the insertion of a similar action or event for the purpose of proof or encouragement; the *locus classicus* is the analogy drawn by Phoenix between Achilles and Meleager in Book 9 of the *Iliad*. For "proof" see ch. 12, n. on **proof.** For "encomium" see ch. 8, n. on **encomia, ceremonial speeches, and "show" speeches.** An "encouragement" refers to a speech designed to promote interest in a subject or way of life, to make a choice, whether moral or practical or both.

**safely:** the metaphor is either military

us that even in Dionysiac revels it is necessary to be sober: he says

> Those who risked danger at Marathon and who fought on the seas at Salamis and Artemisium, and who fought in the ranks at Plataea.

Nowhere does he say "having been victorious;" but everywhere he has, like a thief, kept back the word "victorious" from the outcome, since indeed there the luck was good but was the opposite of that at Chaeronea. For this reason also, anticipating the audience, he directly adds:

> . . .all of whom the city buried, Aeschines, not only those who kept things upright.

(a "safe-conduct") or rhetorical (a convincing argument) or both.

**to be sober:** perhaps a submerged quotation from Euripides' *Bacchae* (317); Euripides says that a prudent woman will not be corrupted even in Bacchic revels. Longinus is emphasizing again the Apollonian rather than Dionysiac character of Demosthenes' inspired passion.

**he says:** a quasi-paraphrased quotation from the same passage in Demosthenes as the previous quotations (18.208). Einarson, in his translation, italicizes the verbs quoted to emphasize the point which Longinus is making, a clever device.

**he directly adds:** the quotation comes from the same passages as those cited previously (18.208); the vocative "Aeschines" is an example of apostrophe.

Chapter 17

# Concealment of Figures

IT is worthwhile, my dear friend, not to omit one of the matters I have theorized about—but I shall be quite concise—that figures naturally ally themselves with sublimity and that they gain wonderfully from it. But where and how shall I phrase it? A readiness to accomplish everything by figures is by its own nature suspect and produces a sense of insinuation, of lying in wait, of plots, of deception; and this is so whenever the speech and

**how shall I phrase it?:** the rhetorical question emphasizes the tone of the first sentence of this chapter, where Longinus reassures any potentially bored readers that he will be brief. Having promised to be concise, Longinus pretends suddenly to perceive the enormity of his commitment in the face of the complex topic.

**readiness . . . deception:** what rhetoric could do the Athenians quickly became aware of; in fact, so hypersensitive did they become that they executed a man who spent a good deal of his life attacking rhetoric and rhetoricians. In Plato's *Apology* (12B), Socrates seeks to defend himself against the charge of being a "powerful" (*i.e.*, clever and unscrupulous) speaker. Aristotle makes the Machiavellian observation (*Rhetoric* 1414b18 ff.) that it is necessary for the speaker to conceal his art and to *seem* to be natural: men suspect artifice in speech the way they suspect doctored wine, and think that the speaker is trying to trap and trick them. Hence speakers often try to persuade their audience that they are "just plain ordinary men." President Roosevelt's "fireside chats" were just such an attempt by a sophisticated rhetorician; Huey Long's incompetence as an intellectual was one of his strongest points. Common, too, are the claims of shrewd Washington attorneys that they are "mere country lawyers." The powerful recommendation of incompetence was noted in antiquity by Philodemus.

**insinuation:** Hermogenes (*On the Method for Powerfulness* 408; p. 419 Rabe) makes "insinuation" the genus of *paraleipsis (praeteritio)* and aposiopesis, *i.e.*, rhetorical devices for making one's "insinuation" or "hidden meaning" more conspicuous. The word may be either honorific—as when it refers to the deeper meaning of myths—or pejorative, like the sense suggested here.

**lying in wait . . . deception:** Quintilian (10.1.21) says that speeches of a great orator must be read and re-read continually, especially those speeches where the excellences have been deliberately concealed, "for often the orator sets his audience up, dissimulates, and lies in wait for it." In 4.5.5, he discusses the situation in which it is necessary to practise deceit on judges.

The word here translated "deception" comes from the Greek word meaning

writing is delivered before somebody who is to make a decision, most of all before tyrants, kings, or leaders in pre-eminent positions. Such a man, you see, is quite sore, if, like a senseless child, he is outsophisticated by a speaker who is a technician at figures, and, taking the deception for an insult, he sometimes goes completely wild, and even if he should prevail over his rage, he firms himself entirely against the persuasiveness of the speeches and writings. For just this reason it is the general opinion that a figure is most excellent when the fact that it is a figure thoroughly escapes our notice. 2. Now surely sublimity and emotion form a remedy and a wonderful kind of assistance against the suspicion of using figures, and the technique of being ready to do anything disappears amid the surrounding beauties and greatnesses and flees from all suspicion. What was said before is sufficient for inferring this: "I swear by those at Marathon. . . ." You see, how has the speaker hidden his figure here? Manifestly in the light itself. Just as a faint gleam is almost made to disappear when the sun radiates all around it, so rhetorical contrivances grow faint when greatness is poured over them from all sides. 3. And something not different from this occurs in painting: although light and shadow are portrayed in colors on the same surface side by side, the light meets our eyes first, and not only is it more conspicuous, but it also appears to be much nearer. Now in speeches and writings, since emotion and sublimity lie nearer to our souls—because of a kind of natural

"contrary to reason" and is used to describe folly, fallacy, and trickery. See ch. 20, n. on **anaphora,** where Aristotle is cited as calling asyndeton and anaphora species of "fallacy."

**tyrants, kings, leaders:** Russell suggests distinctions based on generalized political conditions (for the precise connotations may depend in part on the time during which Longinus wrote): "tyrants" means usurpers; "kings" refers to the so-called "client kings" of the Roman Empire; "leaders" refers to provincial governors. For an example of how an emperor could be affected by a speech, see Libanius, I.87-88.

**outsophisticated:** the root of the word means "skilled"; its cognates can be either pejorative or honorific. Because Longinus is describing rhetorical tricks, and the rhetoricians were generally classified as "sophists," we may assume that the use here is pejorative. English "sophisticated" bears both a good and a bad sense.

**figures:** Longinus uses the diminutive form, which expresses contempt. English "figurines," though it exists, has a different meaning altogether.

**beauties:** the Greek word (lit., "finenesses") is often translated as "beauties," the regular term in the eighteenth century for the fine or beautiful passages in an author.

**Just as a faint gleam:** the simile is a variation on Sappho's poem (Lobel and Page, fr. 34) comparing her love to the

kinship and because of their dazzling effect—over and over again they appear to us before the figures, and they cast technique into the shade and keep it hidden.

moon, whose brightness hides the brilliance of the stars.

**hidden:** in the closing two sentences of the chapter, Longinus draws an analogy between painting and poetry, a familiar notion that dates back at least as far as Simonides. In the opening sentence of the chapter, Longinus had seemed to claim originality for his point, or at least for its application. We may contrast with his theory that propounded by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Composition* 23) in his discussion of the smooth style. Those excelling in this style are, according to Dionysius, Hesiod in epic, Sappho in lyric, Euripides in tragedy, Isocrates in oratory, and no one perfectly in history, although he praises Ephorus and Theopompus for some attainment in it. Of this even-flowing style he says: "it is like . . . well-woven webs or paintings where the light [colors] blend with shadows." Plutarch discusses the analogy of poetry and painting in his essay *How a Young Man Should Read Poetry* (ch. 3).

## Chapter 18

# Questions and Interrogations

AND what should we say about these—questions and interrogations? Does not Demosthenes, by using various species of these figures, make what is said more effective and agitated:

**questions and interrogations:** the rhetorical handbooks make a sharp distinction between these terms: "questions" are so phrased that they must be answered in many words; "interrogations" can be answered either affirmatively or negatively—by a "yes" or "no." Longinus does not observe the distinction in this chapter, and in fact quotes a passage from that favorite of the handbooks, Demosthenes, in which the word "interrogate" is used "incorrectly."

We should observe that Longinus effects his transition from the last chapter to this one by imitating the device he is about to analyze. His opening question is slyly rhetorical, as he pretends to bewilderment on the problem of the fine distinctions noted above.

The device of self-question and answer—what Isidore calls "soliloquy" (Halm, p. 522)—is peculiarly suited to the dialectical nature of the Greek language, but it is a feature of both Greek and Roman culture. We can trace its use from the imaginary dialogues which Socrates holds with himself (*Apology* and *Gorgias*) to the *Confessions* of Augustine. Though perhaps not so common in English, where we read rather than hear, the device is used, as the following examples show:

1) But sometimes virtue starves,
while vice is fed.
What then? is the reward of
virtue bread?
Pope, *Essay on Man* IV.149-50

2) How falls it, then, that with so
smooth an ease
My thoughts I speak, and what
I speak doth flow
In verse, and that my verse best
wits doth please?
Guess we the cause "What, is it
thus?" Fie, no.
"Or so?" Much less. "How
then?" Sure thus it is:
My lips are sweet, inspired
with Stella's kiss.
Sidney, *Astrophel and Stella* 74

3) *Moby Dick, or the White Whale*
A hunt. The last great hunt.
For what?
For Moby Dick, the huge white
sperm whale: who is old, hoary,
monstrous, and swims alone;
who is unspeakably terrible in
his wrath, having so often been
attacked; and snow-white.
Of course he is a symbol.
Of what?
I doubt if even Melville knew.
That's the best of it.
D. H. Lawrence

4) I am going to ask whether the
present movement for ousting
letters from their old predomi-

> Tell me, do you wish to go around asking each other, "Is there any news?" What could be newsier than this, that a man from Macedonia is attacking Greece? "Is Philip dead?" "No, by heaven, but he is sick." What difference does it make to you? Should he suffer something, you will soon create another Philip.

And further on, he says:

> Let's sail to Macedonia. "Where shall we land?" someone asks. The war itself will find out the weakness in Philip's affairs.

Mentioned just by itself, the matter is altogether lacking, but the enthusiastic and rapid quality of the question and answer and his confrontation with himself as though he were another person, by means of the figure, not only make what was said more sublime, but also more believeable. 2. What is emotional, you see, stirs us more when the speaker does not seem to have rehearsed it, but when it seems to be born at just the right moment, when asking and answering oneself imitate the exact right moment for emotion. You see, almost as those interrogated by others are stimulated by the immediacy of the occasion and confront what is asked with the truth of a

> nance in education, and for transferring the predominance in education to the natural sciences, whether this brisk and flourishing movement ought to prevail, and whether it is likely that in the end it will prevail. An objection may be raised which I will anticipate. My own studies have been almost wholly in letters, and my visits to the fields of the natural sciences have been very slight and inadequate, although those sciences have always strongly moved my curiosity. A man of letters, it will perhaps be said, is not competent to discuss the comparative merits of letters and natural sciences as a means of education. To this objection I reply . . . .
>
> Matthew Arnold, *Literature and Science*

**by using various species of these figures:-** Longinus was aware of the distinction made between types of questions, and this word—which means "to characterize by species"—is used to mark his recognition.

**another Philip:** the quotation is a slightly altered version of Demosthenes' first *Philippic* (10).

**affairs:** from the same speech (the first *Philippic* I.44), also slightly altered.

legal proceeding, so the figure of question and answer, stirring the audience, deceives it into the opinion that the points speculated on were spoken in the excitement of being on the spot. And, besides, surely this passage from Herodotus is one of the sublime:

If thus. . .

*(a lacuna of 2 leaves [4 pages or about 4%] occurs here)*

**in a legal proceeding . . . on the spot:** in 22.3 Longinus also conjoins the two phrases, and there too he is praising Demosthenes. The sense of urgent intensity in Demosthenes is the source of Longinus' admiration for him; see the comparison with Cicero in ch. 12.

**if thus . . .:** the lacuna prevents us from knowing just what passage of Herodotus Longinus intended; many suggestions have been made (see Russell's note).

## Chapter 19

# Omission of Connectives

. . .What is spoken falls out and, as it were, pours itself forth, nearly anticipating the speaker himself. "Locking their shields together," says Xenophon, "they thrust, fight, kill, die." And these lines of Eurylochus:

> We went up past the hedge as we were directed,
> Odysseus;
> We saw there in glens the abodes that were finely erected.

**...What:** the lacuna between this chapter and the last seems to have contained the transition from figures of thought to figures of speech. Figures of speech involve changes made to a word, *e.g.*, change of case, omission, change of position, change of person and number, etc. This chapter deals with asyndeton, that is, the omission of connecting words like "and" or "but." Here follow some examples in English:

1) Crafty men condemn them, simple men admire them, wise men use them.
   Bacon *Of Studies* (1597 ed.)
2) I have told you candidly my sentiments. I think they are not likely to alter yours. I do not know that they ought.
   Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (last page)
3) I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each. I do not think that they sing to me.
   T. S. Eliot, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* 124-25

This device should not be confused with the aphoristic style, *e.g.*:

> There are no fixtures in nature. The universe is fluid and volatile. Permanence is but a word of degrees.
> Emerson, *Circles* (paragraph 3)

**anticipating the speaker himself:** Einarson has detected a submerged allusion to a Homeric passage here (*Iliad* 21.262), in which Homer speaks of an irrigation-rivulet as "getting ahead, anticipating" the man who guides it.

**thrust, fight, kill, die:** by leaving out the connectives, Xenophon produces a sense of quick, choppily dense movement; the quotation is from the *Hellenica* (4.3.19), which Xenophon apparently liked enough to repeat in *Agesilaus* (2.12). Compare Lincoln's favorite folksong *The Blue-Tailed Fly:* "the pony run, she jump, she pitch."

**Eurylochus:** the passage is from *Odyssey* 10.251-52. The Greek verses are very dactyllic and probably enhance the break in syntax caused by the lack of a connective. Connectives in Greek are far more common than in English; hence

The lines, you see, chopped apart from each other and—none the worse for it—hurried along, carry a clear suggestion of action and of simultaneously tripping the reader and of hurrying him along in the chase. Such is what the poet has achieved by the lack of connectives.

their omission is proportionately more striking.

**suggestion:** a technical term in rhetoric. Grube deals with its history at some length (*A Greek Critic,* pp. 137-38). Aristotle, who seems to have been the first to use the word, makes it signify an image or reflection, as in a mirror, in water, or in a dream. It is then extended to mean "reflection" in the sense of "indication"; and from this to mean "suggestiveness"—the sort of thing we do by tonal emphasis, as when we pronounce a word differently in order to show that we mean more by it than is usually understood. In print, the device is to put the word in italics. It also consists of using a word which suggests more than it says as a way of enhancing a point. For example, a farmer might tell a neighbor, "One of my yearlings got loose last night and it took me all night to corral it." Here the use of the verb "corral" suggests that the calf was large and wild.

## Chapter 20

# Gathering of Figures

AND a gathering of figures, directed at making the same point, usually achieves a height of excitement—when two or three join in a partnership and contribute strength, persuasiveness, beauty—the kind of thing found in the speech against Midias, where the lack of connectives is woven together with anaphora and vivid typical description:

**a gathering of figures:** Longinus is analyzing certain combinations of figures: asyndeton together with anaphora. The following passages from English literature exemplify the combination:

1) The notice, which you have been pleased to take of my labors, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it.
   Johnson, *Letter to Lord Chesterfield*
2) Theirs not to make reply,
   Theirs not to reason why,
   Theirs but to do and die.
   Tennyson, *The Charge of the Light Brigade* 13-15

**in partnership:** the metaphor is drawn from the kind of "chip-in" party popular in antiquity; our "pot-luck" dinners are a species of this sort of thing.

**strength, persuasiveness, beauty:** this quotation, and those following, are from Demosthenes' speech *Against Midias* (72). The reader should observe the artful way in which Longinus rolls the sequence of quotations one into the other, a variation on the devices of anaphora and asyndeton.

**anaphora:** this, and the word "epanaphora" used below, are synonymous terms. Russell remarks that strictly "anaphora" is the genus: epanaphora refers to clauses beginning with the same word, antistophe to clauses ending with the same word (or words).

Anaphora and asyndeton (on asyndeton, see ch. 19, n. on . . . . **What**) are closely allied, as the famous passage describing Nireus in Homer's *Iliad* (2.671-74) illustrates:

> Nireus brought three seemly ships from Syme,
> Nireus, son of Aglaia and king Charops,
> Nireus, the finest man who came to Ilium
> Of all the Danaans, after faultless Achilles . . . .

The master of anaphora in English is Shakespeare's Richard II:

> What must the King do now? Must he submit?
> The King shall do it. Must he be deposed?
> The King shall be contented. Must he lose
> The name of King?
>
> III.iii
>
> With mine own tears I wash away

The assailant may do many things—some of which the victim may not be able to report to anyone else—by bearing, by look, by voice.

2. Next, so that the speech and writing may advance, not remain at a standstill (you see, quietude lies in standing still, but emotion in confused disorder, since emotion is an impulse and sympathetic excitement of the soul), he directly leaps to other asyndeta and epanaphoras:

. . .by bearing, by look, by voice, when he insults, when

my balm,
With mine own hands I give away my crown,
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,
With mine own breath release all duteous oaths.

IV.i

**vivid typical description:** the word we translate "vivid typical description" is usually simply transliterated, *diatyposis*. It refers to a description by details that are vivid, that "strike" a picture for us. The anonymous *Art of Rhetoric* (Spengel I.457) stresses its connection with emotion, for "vivid typical description" or *diatyposis* is said to excite emotion. Phoibammon, *On Figures* (Spengel III.51) says that it is achieved by adding details; it is, then, a kind of verbal portraiture, like the "characters" of Theophrastus and Renaissance England. We tend to think of description as referring to individuals; the Greek saw the individual as representative of a type.

**The assailant . . . by voice:** from Demosthenes' *Against Midias* (72). The quotation was a favorite one with the rhetoricians, who used it to illustrate a number of different rhetorical devices (anaphora, asyndeton, clarity).

**sympathetic excitement:** the term suggests a psychic rapport between the audience and the speaker's use of figures; later, in 29.2, Longinus sums up the section on figures by saying, "all these things [figures] make speeches and writings turn out more emotional and more sympathetically exciting."

Aristotle defines pleasure as an excitement of the soul (*Rhetoric* 1369b33); he frequently says that part of the orator's job is to "establish" the audience in certain emotional states (1419b13; in 1419b25 he says the speaker should drive the audience into emotions). Apsines, *Art of Rhetoric* (Spengel I.406), says, "We will excite emotion not only by what we have suffered but also by what we fear to suffer." His discussion compares the parallel role of "emotion" in tragedy and rhetoric; and tragedy, of course, is a genre which intends to produce "sympathetic excitement" in an audience. The anonymous *Art of Rhetoric* (Spengel I.427) simply defines an "introduction" as a "speech which excites . . . the emotions of the audience." Longinus conjoins Aristotle's words "establish" and "excite" in the sentence following the one here discussed, and there emotion is defined in Aristotelian terms.

**insults:** the Greek word is *hybris*, which

> he is hostile, when he uses his knuckles, when he treats you like a slave.

Through these devices, the public speaker achieves an effect no different from that of a boxer: he stuns the perception of the judges with one blow after another. 3. Then, like a squall, he throws himself into another attack, saying:

> . . .when he uses his knuckles, when he boxes his ears. These things excite, these things drive men beside themselves with rage, if they are unaccustomed to affrontery and mudslinging. No one reporting these things could present them with appropriate power.

So he everywhere guards the nature of epanaphora and asyndeton with continuous variation; thus his order becomes disorder and, furthermore, his disorder a sort of order.

Aristotle defines in the *Rhetoric* (1378b23-25): "*hybris* is doing or saying things by which shame comes to the one suffering it, not in order that the doer may gain something else, or because something was done to him, but so that he can have pleasure from showing superiority." The passage from Demosthenes is a dramatic form of the definition. The best English translation of *hybris* is the older English word "contumely," as in Hamlet's "the proud man's contumely" (III.i.71): so Hobbes renders the word in his abridgement of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.

**Through these devices . . . after another:** these two independent sentences are an example of asyndeton. Although it is, as Russell notes, a common form in this particular construction, the use of it here is in keeping with Longinus' habitual imitation of the device under analysis.

**variation:** for the technical term, see ch. 23, n. on **variation.** Russell shrewdly observes that the point is paradoxical: "Variation actually maintains the pattern of asyndeton and anaphora, violence and emotion being of their essence." As if to sanction Russell's point, Longinus indulges in oxymoron in the clauses that follow.

**order . . . disorder:** the pleasure to be taken in artful *déshabillé* is well known *e.g.*, Horace's phrase *simplex munditiis* (*Odes* I.5); Ben Jonson's poem which uses that phrase for a title; Robert Herrick's *Delight in Disorder;* and Spenser's (or E. K.'s) phrase "disorderly order" (the *Epistle* to *The Shepheardes Calendar*). The entire *Epistle,* together with E. K.'s glosses, shows how the rhetorical terms used by Longinus were a part and parcel of the critical vocabulary in Elizabethan times—although Spenser had not, of course, read Longinus.

## Chapter 21

# Insertion of Connectives

COME now, insert the connectives, if you want to, as the Isocrateans do,

> And indeed one should not leave this point aside, that the boxer would do many things, first with his bearing, and next with his look, and next of course with his voice,

and you will understand, by consistently transcribing it in this way, that the

**insert the connectives:** As the absence of connectives is technically called *asyndeton,* their presence in quantity is called *polysyndeton.*

**as the Isocrateans do:** perhaps the plural is used poetically, a device Longinus discusses in 33.2-3. Longinus would say of Isocrates what Mark Van Doren used to say of George Santayana: the style lacks "punch." On Isocrates see ch. 4, n. on **panegyric.**

In the parody of the Isocratean manner—which Longinus displays both in the actual re-writing of the passage from Demosthenes and in the chapter as a whole—we find two kinds of insertions: connectives and particles. The absence of connectives is called "asyndeton." Particles are words—not easily translated into English—which suggest tone of voice; the subject is highly complex and is treated with a fineness of distinction worthy of the ancient rhetoricians by Denniston in his massive book *Greek Particles* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1954). Greek writers often used several even in a short sentence; *e.g.,* Homer (*Iliad* 1.101) has four in a sentence of nine words. The difference in English between a sentence without particles and one with them may be seen in the following two versions of an answer to the question "What are you doing tonight?:

1) I am going to the movies tonight.
2) Well, actually, if you really want to know, I thought I would damn well go to the movies.

In sentence (2), the words "well," "actually," and "damn well" are particles. Denniston remarks (p. xxxix) that once a student has learned the subtleties of particles, the difference between reading a page of Plato and one of Thucydides is the difference between reading a score by Beethoven and one by Bach.

In our version of Longinus' parody of the Isocratean manner, we have managed to translate virtually all of the particles.

**transcribing:** from the Greek word we derive the English "paragraph." The substantival form signifies first a sign written in the margin to mark the close

harried and rough qualities of the emotion—if you should level them with connectives—fall off into pointlessness and are at once quenched. 2. You see, just as if someone connected the bodies of runners together, he would remove their rapidity, so emotion also feels the pressure when the connectives and other insertions impede them: emotion loses its freedom of running and its effect of being shot from a catapult.

of a sentence; by extension it could mark a spurious passage or a change of person in a play. By further extension it came to be a technical term in rhetoric designating an exception made by the defendant to one part of the charge. And it could also denote an interpolation or even an imitation. In law, it referred to the practice of writing, in parallel columns, the general law and a particular decree whose legality was questioned. These last two uses are probably what Longinus had in mind for his metaphor.

**rough:** the root has a technical meaning in rhetoric: words having a close collocation of hard, rough sounds, like "b," were called "rough."

**level . . . quenched:** the level style—smooth, even faultless—cannot be great, in Longinus' opinion. So, in 9.12, he remarks that Homer does not sustain his *level* of tension and greatness in the *Odyssey;* in 33.5, he says that the impulsive blaze of sublime artists like Pindar and Sophocles is often "quenched" and fails unluckily. Roughness and unevenness are necessary concomitants of sublimity, just as Mount Aetna will spew up blazing fire mixed with rocks and dust.

**connected:** the play on the etymology of the word is not fully matched either by the normal English word "conjunctions" or by its looser synonym "connective."

**feels the pressure:** Longinus uses this word in a variety of contexts. In 9.10, it describes the feelings of Ajax, trapped in darkness and futility on the battlefield; in 17.1, it describes the feelings of a judge when a smart lawyer tries to trick him by rhetoric; in 22.1, it is bracketed with anger and fright as representing kinds of emotions. Its use here in ch. 21 is a powerful piece of personificaton.

## Chapter 22

# Hyperbata

BUT *hyperbata* must also be put down as part of the same idea. These are an excited arrangement of style or conception out of natural

***hyperbata:*** the device of *hyperbaton* is classified by the rhetoricians sometimes as a figure, sometimes as a *trope.* Thus Phoibammon and an anonymous author both place it in books entitled *On Figures* (Spengel III.48, 136); Trypho, Gregory the Corinthian, and Cocondrius (Spengel III.197, 218, 238) discuss it in books entitled *On Tropes.* Both groups treat it now as a device of style, now as a device of conception or thought.

*Hyperbata* come in several kinds. The simplest is *tmesis,* a device we do not have in English, for it consists of separating a prefix from its root and inserting other words in between. For example, were it allowable in English, we would write: He *co* with his brother *operated,* where the prefix "co" is separated from the rest of the verb by several words. English does have a form of *tmesis* in such verbs as have a semi-attached suffix, *e.g.,* "cut off." One can write and say sentences in which these are separated by intervening words; *e.g.,* "he cut his son off without a cent."

The device called *hysteron proteron* is also a kind of *hyperbaton,* for the normal sequence of actions is reversed. Instead of saying, for example, the usual "born and bred" one may say "bred and born." These examples—*tmesis* and *hysteron proteron*—are mechanical forms of *hyperbata.*

The rhetorician who comes closest to Longinus in subtlety of perception is Hermogenes, in his book *On the Method for Being Powerful* (Spengel II.438-39). Hermogenes begins by objecting to an interpretation of *hyperbaton* which had apparently become current—that it was simply an "interweaving of the sentence structure and a beautified kind of period." The *hyperbaton,* he says, is not only a fine thing but a necessary one. We have a *hyperbaton,* Hermogenes says, whenever the speaker puts into the middle of his sentence that which the audience yearns to hear, namely the thing responsible for the speech. As a result, he adds, *hyperbaton* becomes "an instrument of lucidity." Hermogenes, later in his chapter, acknowledges the emotional impact of the device, and he quotes Homer to show that hyperbaton is not just any kind of transposed word-order.

We may duplicate the effect of hyperbaton in English by imagining the following situation: in the middle of a performance of *Hamlet,* the manager of the theatre walks on the stage and says, "Ladies and Gentlemen, it is regrettable to have to—you see, Mr. Jones [who plays the role of Hamlet] has just dropped dead of a heart attack—and so I feel it improper to continue the performance." The material contained within the dashes is the cause of what he says; it is what the audience "yearns to hear" both from the manager's appearance

and from the word "regrettable." The manager, despite his intention of concluding his second infinitive "to—", has interrupted his own interruption to thrust in the key fact.

Longinus selects a situation parallel to this one except that his example is a *hyperbaton* of a *hyperbaton*: the speaker in Herodotus is so disturbed as to begin with "you see," as if the manager of the theatre had begun, "You see, Mr. Jones . . . ."

Russell observes that the technical term *hyperbaton* was already current in Plato's day, for Plato uses it in his analysis of a poem by Simonides (*Protagoras* 343E) without explanation.

Rhys Roberts, in his edition of Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *On Composition* (p. 26, n. 2), cites some amusing examples of *hyperbaton* from Matthew Arnold:

a) the grand thing in teaching is to have faith that some aptitudes for this every one has.

b) one thing that Protestants have, and that the Catholics think they have a right, where they are in great numbers, to have too, this thing to the Prussian Catholics Prussia has given.

As William Smith observes, Hamlet's soliloquy "Oh, that this too, too solid flesh" (I.ii) is marked by intense agitation made manifest in the *hyperbata:*

> So loving to my mother
> That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
> Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth,
> Must I remember: Why, she would feed on him
> As if increase of appetite had grown
> By what it fed on. And yet within a month—
> Let me not think on 't. Frailty, thy name is woman!—
> A little month, or e're those shoes were old
> With which she followed my poor father's body,
> Like Niobe all tears, why she, even she—
> Oh God, a beast that wants discourse of reason
> Would have mourned longer—married with my uncle. . . .

Perhaps the master of *hyperbaton,* in modern English, is Henry James, whose separation of idiomatic modifiers from that which they modify becomes a mannerism:

> He would have, strangely enough, as it might seem to him, to come back home for it, and there get the impression of her rather pointedly, or at least impatiently and independently, awaiting him.
>
> *The Golden Bowl,* ch. 25

Max Beerbolm parodies this mannerism in his book of parodies, *A Christmas Garland,* "The Mote in the Middle Distance," which begins:

> It was with a sense of a, for him, very memorable something. . . .

**the same idea:** in 8.1, Longinus had used the word "idea" of the five categories which contribute to sublimity; the particular category which he has in mind here is that of "figures" (16.1).

**style of conception:** the rhetoricians differ on whether *hyperbaton* should be classified as a figure of thought or a figure of speech. Longinus avoids the problem by making both types of "figure" one category with two subdivisions that overlap.

sequence and are, as it were, the truest stamp of struggling emotions. You see, as those who in reality are angry or frightened or under pressure from an emulous type of character or from some other emotion—for the emotions are many, even innumerable, and no one can say how many there are—when on each occasion they have put forth some points, they lay the points aside and go jumping after others, throwing some of them in the middle irrationally; and then, circling back to the first points, and straining everywhere from the sense of emotional struggle, as though blown by an unstable wind in a contrary direction, they completely change the arrangement of their style and cast of thought from their natural sequence into tens of thousands of turns: so in the most excellent prose-writers mimesis approaches the workings of nature. Then is technique fulfilled, when it is

**out of natural sequence:** see ch. 16 for the problem of a "natural" order in prose. The word "excited" shows that *hyperbaton* is closely allied with "emotion."

**you see as:** this is the first of two enormously complex *hyperbata* which Longinus himself employs in the course of his analysis. The basic sentence is simple: an "as-clause" balanced by a "so-clause." In between, however, Longinus has thrown an elaborate series of parenthetical and participial clauses in imitation of the device. One of these, as Russell observes, is remarkable: the word "the" is separated from the noun it modifies by ten words in Greek, an effect impossible in English without sounding like Mark Twain's parody of German (see Appendix to *A Tramp Abroad*).

The "as-clause" is terribly long; the "so-clause" is crisply short. As a result of the disproportion we suffer a sense of anti-climax that is almost comic—as Longinus intended. Demetrius (*On Style* 18) says that, in sentences containing several clauses, the last should be longer than the rest and should contain what precedes. Longinus seems deliberately to violate this rule.

**emulous type of character:** in view of Longinus' predilection for imitative analysis, and especially in view of the elaborate joke played in this chapter (see below, n. on **be sparing. . .so many of them**), we should probably take his choice of examples as referring to himself: under the pressure of emulating and imitating the device in question he has himself become involved in *hyperbata*. In 13.4, where Longinus discussed Plato's emulous and competitive imitation of Homer, he commented on the virtues and vices of this attitude.

**turns:** the word, in Greek, is cognate with the type of trope; the play on words is deliberate, for *hyperbaton* was classified as both a "figure" and a "trope."

**prose-writers:** presumably Longinus specifies writers of prose because *hyperbata* would be more unusual here than in poetry, where they would sometimes result from metrical requirements.

**mimesis. . .workings of nature:** the problem of whether art imitates nature directly or imitates models which themselves imitate nature is a vexed one. It appears everywhere in Plato's discussion of mimesis; and the late rhetorical

the general opinion that it is nature at work; and, as already suggested, nature comes out luckily whenever she has in her a technique that escapes notice. As Dionysius of Phocaea says in Herodotus:

> You see, matters for us are poised as on a razor's edge, men of Ionia, whether we are to be free men or slaves—and runaway slaves at that. Now, then, if you are willing to undergo suffering, you'll struggle for the present, but you'll also be able to overthrow your enemies.

2. Here is what would be the natural arrangement:

> O men of Ionia, now is the right moment to take on struggles; matters, as you see, are poised on a razor's edge for us.

He has moved from its natural place the phrase, "men of Ionia," and at once, from fear, he directly threw in the "razor's edge" clause, as though, in view of the danger hanging over them, he could not wait to address them first—though here he transposes the arrangements of his thoughts. You see, before saying that they ought to struggle (which is what he is calling on them to do), he tells them why they ought to struggle, saying,

> matters for us are poised on a razor's edge,

so that in the opinion of his hearers he will not be speaking of something speculative, but of something made necessary. 3. And still more, Thucydides is most powerful at taking things which are by nature unified and

writer Alexander, in his book *On Figures* (Spengel III.11-14), is at pains to argue the distinction between the apparent use of figures in ordinary private speech and the real use of them by public speakers. His argument involves him in a Platonic discussion of the soul's nature.

**fulfilled:** the Greek word means "complete, final, fulfilled, perfect." Technique will have reached its final end or perfection when it is taken as being natural, and vice versa. For the relationship of nature and technique, see chs. 8, 36, and 40.

**luckily:** *i.e.*, "successfully," having "lighted on" the right thing. We may compare Agathon's famous line: art loves chance and chance loves art.

**in Herodotus:** the passage—rather loosely quoted—comes from Herodo-

indivisible and by hyperbata driving them away from each other. Demosthenes, though not quite so wilful as Thucydides, is the most insatiable of all speakers at this sort of thing, and at conveying from his hyperbata his sense of struggle and (by heaven) of speaking on the spot and, in addition, at drawing his hearers along with him into the danger of his hyperbata, [4.] for often he will leave what he has started to say hanging, and in between, in an abnormal and unlikely syntax, he will cart in extraneous matter upon extraneous matter, throwing his audience into a fright lest the whole speech or writing fall to pieces and compelling the audience to share with the speaker the danger of the struggle; next, unexpectedly, after a long time, put in at just the right moment, at the end, having presented in payment of his debt what has long been sought, by the very hazardous use of asides thrown in among the hyperbata, he astounds his audience much

tus 6.11. For the rhetorical principle exemplified in the quotation, see above, n. on ***hyperbata***.

**Demosthenes. . .:** the second of Longinus' own involved *hyperbata*. This is the next to last sentence in the chapter; it sprawls over two of the paragraph numbers assigned by Renaissance editors (3 and 4) and is even harder to read than the first one—though it will yield good sense if one hears it read aloud, with due emphasis and delivery. The point of having two such imitative examples will become clear after the first sentence of the chapter.

After struggling with this sentence, the reader may be glad to agree with Theon, who says in his *Progymnasmata* (Spengel II.82) that one should be wary of using *hyperbata:* "We do not, in general, approve of this kind of thing. . . for the expression becomes artful and not like ordinary speech." Or he might agree with Cassius Longinus, who, in his *Art of Rhetoric* (560), says, "if you should use *hyperbata* out of season, forcibly separating words, breaking the events, and disturbing the sequence, you will displease and irritate, and your language will be ambiguous and show great gaps, even if the period be unseasonably extended and its limits exceed all measure" (tr. Prickard). But he adds, "You will not carry men with you, unless you are a wizard with grace and pleasure in your gift, changing and embroidering your terms." If Longinus is to be forgiven, it must be on these grounds. Probably no other Greek prose author could have carried such enormous *hyperbata* off successfully except Plato.

**next, unexpectedly. . .hyperbata:** a stunning *hyperbaton* which we have tried to duplicate in the English word-order. Three sets of two adverbial phrases interlinkingly surround the participle "having presented in payment of his debt" and its object "what has long been sought":

1) (a) deceptively; (b) after a long time
2) the thing sought for
3) (a) at just the right moment; (b) at the end
4) having presented
5) (a) by the very hazardous; (b) thrown in among the hyperbata

This set of five interlinked items is itself

more. But let me be sparing of more examples because there are so many of them.

set in between "next" and the main verb "astounds," with which the whole independent clause opens and closes (the adverbial "much more" precedes the verb in Greek).

**be sparing. . .so many of them:** the joke is outrageous, for Longinus has cited only one example. He is, of course, referring to his own two enormous *hyperbata* as well. No matter how well Terentianus knew Greek, and even if the deference paid the young Roman by Longinus be sincere, we may well believe that he had some trouble with the chapter. Let us hope that Terentianus was able to smile when he read the last sentence.

Chapter 23

# Polyptota, Athroismoi, Variations, Climaxes

THE figures called *polyptota, athroismoi*, variations, climaxes, which give one a sense of struggle, work together, as you understand, for

***polyptota:*** Longinus deals with several rhetorical tricks in this chapter; whether the first one mentioned, *polyptoton,* is to be taken as the genus and the next three as species, or whether he intends all four to be co-equal, is unclear.

Literally, *polyptoton* means having "many case-endings." Herodian, in his book *On Figures* (Spengel III.97), defines it as the use of a noun in differing cases in successive clauses or sentences. Since English has lost almost all of its case-endings, or inflections, examples are not easy to produce. A simple one would be "*She* is my girl; I love *her*."

***athroismoi:*** in the singular, this noun is usually translated as "accumulation." The device takes two forms: (1) heaping up or accumulating a series of individual words whose unity is established not by their meaning but by their relevance to the particular situation; *e.g.,* as when Hamlet (IV.iv) reviews the reasons obliging him to kill Claudius: "Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means/To do 't." Form (2) consists of heaping up or accumulating phrases or clauses rather than individual words; *e.g.,* in Hamlet's soliloquy "To be or not to be" (III.i):

> For who would bear the whips
> and scorns of time,
> The oppressor's wrong, the proud
> man's contumely,
> The pangs of despised love, the
> law's delay,
> The insolence of office, and the
> spurns
> That patient merit of the un-
> worthy takes?

Walt Whitman made a poetic career out of simple-minded exploitation of *athroismos;* for him it was a way of comprehending the cosmos.

**variation:** the word in its technical sense denotes an intermixing not only of cases but also of words. Because English lacks case-endings, examples are not available, but a crude parallel would be to re-write Lincoln's famous phrase "of the people, by the people, and for the people" with different nouns: "of the people, by the populace, for the citizenry." Or, if we can imagine the appropriate case-endings, such a sequence as this from Hamlet (I.iv): "I'll call thee Hamlet,/King, father, royal Dane. Oh, answer me!/Let me not burst in ignorance. . . ." This example combines "variation," *athroismos,* and *asyndeton* (see ch. 19).

**climaxes:** literally, a "ladder"; as, in climbing a ladder, we start from the rung on which we have stopped, so in *climax* the speaker voices clauses consisting of two parts, the second of which becomes the first part of the next clause:

ornamental effect and complete sublimity and emotion. And what of the

Russell aptly cites Paul as a master of the device, *e.g.*, Romans 8:29-30.

> For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate. . .
> whom he did predestinate, them also he called: and
> whom he called, them he also justified: and
> whom he justified, them he also glorified.

George Herbert's poem *A Wreath* is a virtuoso employment of the device:

> A wreathed garland of deserved praise,
> Of praise deserved, unto thee I give,
> I give to thee, who knowest all my ways,
> My crooked winding ways, wherein I live,
> Wherein I die, not live; for life is straight,
> Straight as a line, and ever tends to thee,
> To thee, who art more far above deceit,
> Than deceit seems above simplicity.
> Give me simplicity, that I may live,
> So live and like, that I may know thy ways,
> Know them and practise them: then shall I give
> For this poor wreath, give thee a crown of praise.

In Latin, the device was sometimes called a *catena* because its parts were tied together, as in a daisy-chain or wreath.

Both climax and an *athroismos* based on *climax* can be seen in this stanza by Spenser (*The Faerie Queene* II.vi.13):

> No tree, whose branches did not bravely spring;
> No braunch, whereon a fine bird did not sitt;
> No bird, but did her shrill notes sweetely sing;
> No song, but did contain a lovely ditt:
> Trees, braunches, birds, and songs were framed fitt
> For to allure fraile mind to careless ease.
> Careless the man soon woxe, and his weake witt
> Was overcome of thing that did him please;
> So pleased, did his wrathful purpose faire appease.

Ordinarily, in a *climax*, items are listed in ascending order so as to finish with a "bang." As a specimen of, literally, anti-*climax* we may cite Hamlet's observation of the skull of Yorick (V.i):

> Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam, and why of loam whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer barrel?

**ornamental effect:** the Greek word is transliterated into English as "cosmos," *i.e.*, the world or universe, from which we derive "cosmetic." The word signifies both order and, by natural association, beauty or ornament. The following passage from *Moby Dick* (ch. xlii) makes the double sense vivid:

> And when we consider that other theory of the natural philosophers, that all other earth hues—every stately or lovely emblazoning—the sweet tinges of sunset skies and woods; yea, and the

changes of case, tense, person, number, gender—how they sometimes diversify and wake up the sentence! 2. But I say—concerning number—that these things are not only found to be ornamental which, while singular in form are, when theorized about, plural in force, as when the poet says:

> gilded velvets of butterflies, and the butterfly cheeks of young girls; all these are but subtle deceits, not actually inherent in substance—, but only laid on from without; so that all deified Nature absolutely paints like the harlot, whose allurements cover nothing but the charnel-house within; and when we proceed further, and consider that the mystical *cosmetic* [italics ours] which produces every one of her hues, the great principle of light, for ever remains white or colorless. . . .

tense, person, number, and gender. Then, out of all these items, he selects the eighth for discussion! At no point in the chapter does he discuss any of the others, although a few of them are taken up in later chapters. It would seem, then, that either there are lacunae which we do not suspect or else—as is much more likely—Longinus is partly joking at the elaborate nomenclature and jargon of the rhetorical handbooks, partly willing to rely on their being known to his audience; for he does, at one point or another, employ most of the devices listed.

**And what:** to begin a sentence with this kind of "What" is a familiar rhetorical device used by speakers who wish to pull in some material in a way which will suggest that the wealth of evidence is beyond that speaker's capacity to keep up with it. Longinus used the fuller form of this device in 18.1, where he introduced the question of "questions-and-answers"with a rhetorical question.

**number:** the use of singular for plural is taken up separately in ch. 24. There is a kind of academic wit in Longinus' multiplicity of plurals—eight words in a row all plural in number. It seems almost malicious of Longinus, after this monotonous *athroismos* of terms, to talk about how such devices "diversify and wake up" a sentence.

Longinus has now listed nine rhetorical devices: *polyptota, athroismoi,* variations, *climaxes,* and changes of case,

**singular:** continuing with his *athroismos* of academic jokes, Longinus reaches a kind of climax by putting the word "singular" in the plural; unfortunately, the effect is not duplicable in English.

**theorized about:** perhaps this translation stretches English idiom a little. From the root of the Greek word we derive our "theory." It means to have an understanding of the nature of a whole by means of the relationship of its parts to the whole and of the causes thereof. Idiomatically "inspect" would be better, but it would lose the philosophic force of the Greek word.

**as when the poet says:** we do not know the source of this quotation. Despite a textual problem in the quotation (see Russell), it seems to refer to fishing for tunny-fish, an activity which caught the imagination of many ancient writers, *e.g,* Aeschylus (*Persians* 424). Oppian

At once an innumerable people
Were scattered along the seashore and shouted, "Look!
Tunny!"

But it is more worth keeping in mind that there are places where plurals used for singular strike us as more magniloquent and court our good opinion by the sense of a crowd of numbers. 3. Such are Oedipus' lines in Sophocles:

O weddings, weddings,
You are the ones, conceiving and begetting us,
Who again let loose the selfsame seed, and showed
Father, brothers, sons as kindred blood,
Brides, mother, wives—all deeds that are
Most shameful among mankind.

You see, all these are one word—"Oedipus," and on the other side, "Jocasta"; but all the same, having been spilled into the plural, the number actually pluralizes the misfortunes. These also are made more in number:

Out came the Hectors and the Sarpedons

*(Fishing* 3.631 ff.), and Aelian (*Natural History* 15.5). D'Arcy Thompson's book *A Glossary of Greek Fishes* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947) collects the sources.

**people. . .were scattered:** the noun is singular in form (though plural in meaning); the verb is plural in form. In Greek this shift is much more noticeable than in English, whether that spoken in Britain or in America.

**magniloquent:** the word is generally used in a pejorative sense in Greek; though it can have good connotations, it is combined here with a phrase which is also pejorative.

**courts our good opinion. . .crowd of numbers:** the word for "courts our opinion" is, like "magniloquent," generally pejorative; it means "to curry favor with, to work at getting a good opinion of yourself." Combined with the phrase "crowd of numbers" it seems, as Russell suggests, to be a conceit, and one that comes perilously close to being "false wit." Perhaps the parallel passage in Caecilius would shed light on the choice of words and the conceit.

The real reason for the ambiguous language, however, becomes clear in the next chapter. There Longinus discusses the opposite device—using singulars for plurals—which he much prefers because it resembles an organic unity. See ch. 24, n. on **compressing the number.**

**in Sophocles:** the passage quoted, somewhat loosely, is from *Oedipus Rex* (1403-08).

**pluralizes:** the subject is plural in form, singular in meaning; the verb is singu-

And the Platonic passage which we have cited in another place:

> 4. For no Pelopses or Cadmuses or Aegyptuses and Danauses nor any other of the many who are barbaric in nature dwell with us, but we ourselves, Greeks—not a barbarian mixture—live here. . .

and the rest of the passage consistent with this. By nature matters are heard as more ostentatious when the words are set one on another in herds. Still one ought not to do this except when the subject admits of exaggeration in the form of pluralizing, hyperbole, or emotion—either one or more of these—for to fasten bells everywhere is certainly too much like a sophist.

lar in form, plural in meaning.

**made more:** probably another in Longinus' accumulation of rhetorical jokes. The Greek verb is cognate with the rhetorical term "pleonasm": using more synonymous terms than necessary "for the sake of ornament or emphasis" (Alexander, *On Figures* [Spengel III.32]). The pleonasm, of course, is the second quotation, from an unknown tragedy—"Out came the Hectors and the Sarpedons"—since the point is perfectly clear from the first quotation.

**in another place:** we do not know where; Russell suggests that it might be another work entirely or in one of the lacunae—perhaps that in 12.2, where Demosthenes and Plato were compared. Longinus' only other use of the word for "in another place" (9.2) suggests that it came from another work. The quotation is from Plato's *Menexenus* (245D).

**Pelopses. . .Danauses:** these plural forms are nowadays illiterate, but translated Greek plurals would not convey either the sense or the force to a Greek-less reader. David Hume pluralizes classical names *anglice* in Essay XIII, *Of Eloquence:*

> Our orators would then have done honour to their country, as well as our poets, geometers, and philosophers; Archimedeses and Virgils.

**in herds:** the word seems to be the anti-climax of a sequence: "people," "crowd," "herd": see above, n. on **climax.** Longinus is probably joking on Plato's combination of *athroismos* and rhetorical use of the plural for the singular.

**emotion:** Longinus is insistent, as always, that there be a natural coherence and inherence of subject and rhetorical device: see his comments on artistic selection and "synthesis" in 10.1. Caecilius had omitted mention of emotion; hence Longinus includes it as the climax of his brief *athroismos* (combined with polysyndeton) of places appropriate for the use of the plural.

**fasten bells. . .sophist:** the image is an echo of Longinus' favorite orator, Demosthenes (25.90). The metaphor appears, as Russell argues, to be drawn from the strings or straps of bells put on warhorses or circus animals, or perhaps even domestic horses, as in our song *Jingle Bells.* The image presents a picture of bright jingling sounds meant to attract the attention by their multiplicity and motion, but which, on analysis, are dull, repetitive, and empty.

Chapter 24

# Singular for Plural

BUT in fact the opposite device, driving plurals together into singulars, is also sometimes most sublime in appearance. Demosthenes says:

> Then the whole Peloponnesus stood apart.
>
> And really, while Phrynichus put in his drama *The Capture of Miletus,* the theatre burst into tears.

Compressing the number from what is divided to what is unified gives more the sense of a single body. 2. What is responsible for the ornamental effect I take to be the same in both: where the words are essentially singular, to pluralize them stirs the emotions contrary to expectation. But where the words are plural, making the plural come together into a sonorous unity is, because of the transformation of things into their opposite, contrary to calculation.

**sublime in appearance:** this is the only time that Longinus uses the word—one word in Greek—and it appears to be the only use so far recorded in extant Greek literature. What the nuance and tone of the word may be are not definable.

**Demosthenes says:** the passage is from *On the Crown* (18.18). In this, as in the next example, much of the force is lost because we use the figure in everyday speech; to a Greek, to speak of a unit ("the Peloponnesus") as "standing apart" would be striking.

Example of singulars for plurals can be found in English, as, for example, in Churchill's use of "the German" or "the Nazi," or Byron's poem "The Destruction of Sennacherib":

> The Assyrian came down like the
> wolf on the fold,
> And his cohorts are gleaming
> in purple and gold.

**And. . .tears:** Herodotus 6.21.

**compressing the number:** the argument rests on the metaphysical point made in ch. 10: the "stuff" used by the artist is itself an organic whole, some parts of which "stick out" as high points to be taken up; these are "selected" and then "synthesized" into "one body." Because the device of making plurals into singulars resembles this process, Longinus seems to prefer it, for he uses no such ambiguous language here as he does of the inverse technique (see ch. 23 . on **courts our good opinion. . .crowd of numbers**).

**stirs the emotions contrary to expecta-**

**tion:** the text is either highly compressed here or corrupt, or both. The ms. reading for the word translated "stirs the emotions" makes no sense. The phrase "contrary to expectation" may go with it, *i.e.*, "is a mark of unexpected emotion" (Russell). But why it should be contrary to expectation is not clear. Perhaps the point is that since Caecilius did not discuss emotion, he would not have given the device credit for producing emotional effects.

## Chapter 25

# Historical Present

IN fact, whenever you introduce past events as if they were coming to be and present, you will make your speech and writing no longer a tale, but a thing involved in the struggle. Xenophon says:

> A certain man, who fell under Cyrus' horse and is being trod on, strikes the horse in the belly with his sword. The horse, rearing, throws Cyrus off and he falls.

**tale:** the Greek word is a rhetorical term used for the "narrative" or "exposition" of the facts in a case. Longinus is referring to the device which we call the "historical present." It was not a consistent or fixed feature of Greek prose; Russell gives a synopsis of its history, with references to the scholarly literature on the subject. The only other Greek rhetorical writer to discuss it is Aristides (Spengel II.552-53), who is aware of the paradoxical quality that comes from the shift of tense, for he says it lends a "strange appropriateness" to what is said.

The failure of the historical present to become a feature of Greek rhetoric probably derives from the tense-system peculiar to Greek, especially the "aorist" tense: this is a set of forms that can denote the time of an event as either past or present (or even future), and in any extent, from a split second to an aeon. The action, however long it may actually take, is conceived of as a single event. Hence the Greeks did not have to worry about the problem of dramatically annihilating the sense of time which separated the audience from the events narrated. In English, as in Latin, the historical present is singularly vivid; it presents the actions as actually occurring before our eyes. Dickens is especially fond of the device: the opening chapter of *Bleak House,* for example, is a masterful intermixing of present participles serving as main verbs interspersed with both past and present tenses of narrative.

The historical present is a common feature of colloquial speech, *e.g.,* the famous "So he says to me" and "I says to him." John uses it in his account of the burial of Jesus (19:42-20:1):

> There they laid Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation *day;* for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.
>
> The first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

**Xenophon says:** the passage is from *The Education of Cyrus* (7.1.37); the last clause of the quotation ("and he falls") is not in our texts of Xenophon.

Thucydides is like this in very many places.

**in very many places:** Russell says that Thucydides uses the device far less than Xenophon; Longinus' adjective is in the superlative, a fact which suggests that such was not his impression of Thucydides.

Chapter 26

# Change of Person

SIMILARLY, the change of person makes for a sense of involvement in the struggle and often gives the audience the opinion that it is embroiled in the middle of the dangers:

> You would say that they were unwearied, untired
> Opposing these in war, so eagerly they battled.

**change of person:** specifically, the use of the colloquial second person; it is rarer in Greek than in Latin or English, and hence would be more startling—as Longinus says at the end of the chapter; it "wakes up" the audience.

A good specimen of the colloquial—and even vulgar—use of the device occurs in the graveyard scene in *Hamlet* (V.i):

> *Hamlet:* How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?
> *1. Clown*: I' faith, if a' be not rotten before a' die—as we have many pocky corses that will scarce hold the laying in—a' will last you some eight year or nine year. A tanner will last you nine year.

It is almost a mannerism in Sterne, as this passage from ch. 1 of *Tristram Shandy* shows:

> Had they duly weighed and considered all this, and proceeded accordingly,—I am verily persuaded I should have made a quite different figure in the world, from that in which the reader is likely to see me.—Believe me, good folks, this is not so inconsiderable a thing as many of you may think it;—you have all, I dare say, heard of the animal spirits, as how they are transfused from father to son, etc., etc.—and a great deal to that purpose:—Well, you may take my word. . . .

Ch. 3 of *Moby Dick* displays the device in all its forms—even more than Longinus discusses in this and the next chapter:

> Entering the gable-ended Spouter Inn, you found yourself in a wide, low, straggling entry with old-fashioned wainscots, reminding one of the bulwarks of some condemned old craft. On one side hung a very large oil-painting so thoroughly besmoked, and every way defaced, that in the unequal cross-lights by which you viewed it, it was only by diligent study and a series of systematic visits to it, and careful inquiry of the neighbors, that you could in any way arrive at an understanding of its purpose.

Here we have a mixture of persons in "you" and "one" as well as a mixture of tenses.

**you would say. . .battled:** the quotation is from *Iliad* 15.697-98. Longinus has

And Aratus says:

> May you never plunge into the sea in this month.

2. And Herodotus somewhere says:

> From the city of Elephantine you will sail upstream, and then you will come to a smooth plain. Having crossed the plain, embarking again in another ship, you will sail for two days; then you will come to a great city named Meroe.

Do you see, fellow-pupil, how he takes your soul and leads it through these places, turning the sense of hearing into the sense of sight? All such addresses, fixed on the persons themselves, put the audience right into the action as it is worked on. 3. And whenever you do not talk to all of the audience, but to one person only—

chosen his quotation well to show how the audience becomes strained and involved: the moment when Homer breaks into this dramatic second person occurs at the height of the battle for the Greek ships; a few lines later, at the beginning of Book 16, Patroclus comes weeping to Achilles, and the turning point of the poem is reached.

**Aratus:** see ch. 10, n. on **Aratus**. The quotation is from his poem *Phenomena* (287).

**Herodotus somewhere says:** the passage is both abridged and turned from the Ionic to the Attic dialect. It comes from Herodotus 2.29; note how tranquil this scene is in comparison with the passage from Homer.

**worked on:** the Greek word gives us our English derivative "energy." Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1411b2 ff.) discusses devices for "working on" things so as to place them "before the eyes" of the audience: to do so requires that the picture presented must be in action, and metaphors may be classified as "working" and "non-working." Trypho, in his book *On Tropes* (Spengel III.199) defines such "energy" as bringing the thought before the reader's sight. Presumably Longinus had the technical sense in mind when he used the word in this particular context.

**talk:** the word—which means "chatter" in earlier Greek—is used to refer to personal conversation, the sort of "chatty" tone always struck by the use of the second person. A man may use a chatty tone before an audience of more than one, but his aim is to make the audience feel what we call "informal," as if the speaker were addressing each one personally.

You would not know on which side the son of Tydeus stood—

you will make him more emotionally stirred and at the same time more attentive and more full of a sense of the struggle, waking him up by these personal addresses.

**You would not know. . .Tydeus stood:** *Iliad* 5.85. The line seems at first only to repeat the point made earlier, but of course Longinus could assume a knowledge of context. Homer is describing a high point in the *aristeia* of Diomedes, the son of Tydeus. So involved is he in the raging battle-lines that you cannot discern which side he is fighting on. It is the blurring of the space between speaker and audience, the involvement, which Longinus wishes to stress, and his quotation is designed to take the reader back to the first quotation, also from Homer, and the point made there—what we call "audience-participation." Thornton Wilder has used the device extensively in his play *Our Town,* in which the stage manager speaks both to the audience and to the characters in the play.

## Chapter 27

# Shifts in Person

FURTHERMORE, there are in fact times when the prose-writer, telling a tale about a person, is suddenly carried away and assumes the point of view of the person himself, and this species of figure is a kind of outburst of emotion:

> And shouting loud Hector bid them
> Toward the ships to speed, to leave alone bloody plunder.

**prose-writer:** although Longinus quotes examples from poetry in the chapter, his use of the word "prose-writer" suggests that he has in mind the primary aim of his work: to aid men in political life. Otherwise we must assume that the phrase "and poets" has dropped out of the text. Longinus is quite careful in his use of such terms. The combination "prose-writers and poets" appears four times (1.3, 9.15, 13.2, 40.2), and in each place Longinus wishes to make generalizations applicable to both kinds of authors. He uses the phrase "prose-writers and public speakers" once (30.1), where he is discussing the use of diction, particularly "poetic" diction, in prose: since poetic diction is appropriate for poets, Longinus stresses its function in prose, as he indicates by adding the word for "public speakers." He uses the word "prose-writers" alone three times: in 22.1 he is discussing *hyperbaton*, a device which poets are often driven into by the exigencies of meter, but which in prose-writers can only be deliberate; in 33.1 he is contrasting Lysias and Plato, Hyperides and Demosthenes—all prose-writers. Consequently, the third use (here in ch. 27) is best taken as referring to prose-writers only.

**tale:** the word also refers to that part of a speech in which a "narrative" or "exposition" of the facts in a case is given; see ch. 25, n. on **tale**. Two of Longinus' examples of the device discussed in this chapter come from Homer, who of course told "tales"; the closing quotation is from the *Odyssey*, which Longinus had said earlier was characterized by its narrative quality (9.13).

**person:** the same pun exists in English: a "person" may be a character in a tale or a technical term in grammar. Such shifts in person would be more noticeable in Greek, which lacked the mechanical warnings which English possesses in quotation marks. Readers of the King James version of the Bible will know how difficult it sometimes is to discern where the author is speaking and where the character in the narrative is being quoted.

Longinus distinguishes two kinds of shift in person. The first kind occurs

when there is a narrator, who is relating a speech in indirect discourse; at a dramatic moment the narrator shifts suddenly from indirect to direct discourse, as in this passage from *Moby Dick* (ch. 135):

> But when Ahab cried out to the steersman to take new turns with the line, and to hold it so; and commanded the crew to turn round on their seats, and tow the boat up to the mark; the moment the treacherous line felt that double strain and tug, it snapped in the empty air!
>
> "What breaks in me? Some sinew cracks!—'tis whole again; oars! oars! Burst in upon him!"

The second kind of shift occurs when the narrator (or character within a narration), while speaking in the first person to another person, suddenly interrupts himself and addresses a third person who is not present as if he were there. The device is to be distinguished—at least for Longinus—from "apostrophe," a term the rhetorical handbooks are not consistent in defining. For Longinus an apostrophe is an oath (see ch. 16). The current device requires an actual shift in grammatical persons; in an apostrophe there need be only a shift in the individual being addressed while the grammatical person may remain the same:

Addison (*Spectator* 321) observed a fine example of the device in Milton (*Paradise Lost* 4.720-24):

> Thus at their shady Lodge arriv'd, both stood,
> Both turn'd, and under op'n sky ador'd
> The God that made both Sky, Air, Earth, and Heav'n
> Which they beheld, the moon's resplendent Globe
> And starry Pole: Thou also mad'st the Night. . .

Addison says of this sudden shift in person:

> ...most of the modern heroic poets have imitated the ancients in beginning a speech without premising that the person said thus or thus; but if is easy to imitate the ancients in the omission of two or three words, it requires judgment to do it in such a manner as they shall not be missed, and that the speech may begin naturally without them.

Milton uses the device very, very rarely.

The "wild and whirling words" of Hamlet provide many examples of such shifts in person, as is appropriate to his mercurial disposition and many roles and postures; *e.g.*, in his soliloquy after conversing with the ghost (I.v):

> Remember thee!
> Yea, from the table of my memory
> I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
> All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
> That youth and observation copied there;
> And thy commandment all alone shall live
> Within the book and volume of my brain,
> Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by Heaven!
> O most pernicious woman!
> O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!
> My tables,—meet it is I set it down,
> That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain.
> At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark.
> So, Uncle, there you are.

"Whomever I shall see going off of his own volition,
Death for him is what I have in mind."

Now, then, though the poet has taken it upon himself to tell the tale, as is appropriate, he has set the abrupt threat, without showing it beforehand, suddenly in the animus of the chief. You see, it would have had a cold effect, if he had said parenthetically, "Hector said such and such"; but as it is, the transition in the passage has suddenly overtaken the author even as he is making his transition. 2. For this reason the use of this figure should have priority when the right moment is urgent and does not present the writer a chance to delay, but imposes on him the necessity of making his shift from person to person, as we see also in this passage from Hecataeus:

Ceyx, making a terrible fuss over this, straightway
ordered the sons of Heracles to depart. "For I am unable

The device was extended radically by Dickens, in *Bleak House,* which is written partly in the third person and partly in the first person; in the twentieth century, authors like Virginia Woolf and Jean Paul Sartre have pushed its use to an extreme. The result has been a critical emphasis on what is called "point of view."

**And shouting loud...I've in mind:** the quotation is from *Iliad* 15.346-49. Here Longinus illustrates the first kind of shift in person (see preceding note).

**a cold effect:** the word here does not carry any sense of the stylistic vice "frigidity" (*i.e.,* "false wit"); it is like the primary meaning of the verb "become cold" applied to Plato in 12.3, where Plato is said not "to grow cold" even if he does aim for "swelling" and "impressiveness" (see ch. 12). English "wooden," though metaphorically different, gets the point.

**also:** the word can equally mean "even," and since few ancient critics think much of Hecataeus as an author, it may be that Longinus intends that sense here—especially since the quotation is in support of what he has just observed, that there are special moments when the device is appropriate. "Even Hecataeus knew this." To put Hecataeus "in the middle," between those two great figures Homer and Demosthenes, is a kind of joke. For the trick of juxtaposing quotations amusingly, see below, n. on **Penelope say.**

Hecataeus was an historian, predecessor of Herodotus; he flourished in the sixth century B.C., at a time when prose was in its infancy and walked in short steps. His work survives only in fragments, of which the one Longinus quotes is #30. His style was apparently what we call "primer," that is, extremely short sentences strung together without much subordination or sense of periodic structure. The passage which Longinus quotes is typical of the fragments.

**sons of Heracles:** there is a textual problem here; Russell takes the phrase "of Heracles" as a gloss. After the death

> to protect you. In order not to destroy yourselves and injure me, go away into some other country."

3. Demosthenes, in his speech on Aristogeiton, has aroused emotion in another way by a rapid shift of persons. He says:

> And will none of you be found to have anger and indignation at those violent things which this shameless beast, who—O most foul of all men, when your licentiousness is blocked not by bolts and gates, which someone might open up—

With his conception unfinished, he swiftly shifts, and, on account of his animus, almost tears apart the expression into two persons ("who—O most foul of all men"), and then, having seemed to turn away from his speech against Aristogeiton and to have left off, he has all the same, through his emotion, turned himself to it much more. 4. No differently does Penelope say:

of Heracles, his sons fled to Trachis, where the king, Ceyx, under pressure from Heracles' old enemy Eurystheus, refused to take them in.

**He says:** the quotation is from the speech *Against Aristogeiton* (25.27); even in antiquity it was suspected that the speech was not really by Demosthenes (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Demosthenes* 57, expresses his doubts).

**who—O most foul:** Milton uses the same device as Demosthenes for Peter's speech in *Lycidas* (119); the famous phrase there—"Blind mouths!"—is a direct apostrophe to the clergy, said partly in the persona of Peter, partly in the voice of Milton himself.

**Penelope say:** *Odyssey* 4.681 ff. Longinus carefully balances this Homeric quotation against that with which he opened the chapter: in the first quotation the narrator (Homer) broke off his narration in indirect discourse to allow the character (Hector) to speak in his own *persona;* in the closing quotation, a character within the narration (Penelope) breaks off her speech to the herald to apostrophize others. At the same time that Penelope's speech is in chiastic relationship with that of Hector, it also is a contrasting parallel to the passage just cited before Demosthenes: where Demosthenes switched from a plural second person to a singular, Penelope switches from a singular second person to a plural—and in each instance, the first party addressed is present, the second absent.

There is, in addition, a marvellously gentle wit in bracketing Penelope and Demosthenes—a collocation that cannot occur often in criticism—just as there was in coupling Homer and Hecataeus in the first two quotations.

Herald, why have those glorious wooers sent you here?
To order each serving-maid of noble Odysseus
To leave her tasks and prepare a feast for them?
Would that they had not wooed me nor gathered elsewhere;
Would that on one last feast they'd banquet—you that often
Meet to devour the provender of others, never as infants
Hearing from your fathers what sort of man was Odysseus.

## Chapter 28

# Periphrasis

AND certainly, I think, no one would doubt that periphrasis contributes to the sublime. You see, as in music the principal melody turns out

**periphrasis:** Tiberius, in his book *On Figures* (Spengel III.75), says that periphrasis consists of varying the simple and self-sufficient structure of the sentence, for the sake of ornament, emotion, or appropriate greatness, by the use of more words than those needed to express the idea in standard speech. Alexander, in his *On Figures* (Spengel III.32), says that periphrasis strikes him as peculiar to poetry, but it can be found in prose: he cites examples from Demosthenes and Thucydides, adding that Thucydides is especially fond of it.

The simple and normal way of saying something is called *phrasis;* periphrasis is a roundabout way of saying the same thing. Hence the Venerable Bede, in his book *On Figures* (Halm, p. 614), translates it *circumlocutio.* Greek critics had a much sharper sense of standard idiom than we do, and, as a result, they classified much as periphrasis which we would not. Alexander cites a line from Xenophon—"A thought once came to me" as a periphrasis for "I once thought."

The device is perhaps most conspicuously seen in Dante's *Inferno,* where—since the name of God cannot be mentioned—Dante must find hundreds of periphrases for it, *e.g.,* "The Emperor of that high Imperium" (I.24); "Hell's great Foeman" (II.16); "Another" (XXVI.141) [Translations and references are from the version by Dorothy Sayers]. Milton, too, is a master of the device, *e.g.,* "the dear might of him that walked the waves" (*Lycidas* 173). This last is a particularly good example, for it echoes the common Greek periphrasis, cited regularly in the rhetorical handbooks, "the might of Heracles."

All periphrasis depends for its success on a simultaneous knowledge of two things: one, the original standard reference (the story of Jesus and his walking on waters for the allusion from *Lycidas*) and two, the meaning of the words used in the periphrasis ("emperor" and "imperium" in the first citation from Dante).

Sometimes, of course, periphrasis is almost absurd, especially when it seeks to signify low or trivial things; Henn (p. 59) cites this periphrasis for a pipe from Cowper: "The short tube/That fumes beneath his nose." The coprophilic periphrases of Pope's *Dunciad* are at once an illustration and a parody of the device (II.93 ff.):

> In office here fair Cloacina stands. . .
> From her black grottos near the temple-wall. . .
> Renewed by ordure's sympathetic force
> As oiled with magic juices for the course. . .
> Nor heeds the brown dishonours of his face.

**the principal melody:** The following notes are connected, for they explain

more pleasing because of what are called pralltrillers, so periphrasis often harmonizes with the principal standard of speech and resonates with it for more ornamental effect, especially if it has nothing blown up and unrefined, but is pleasantly mixed in. 2. We may infer this sufficiently in

Longinus' analogy between music and literature. The explanations are tentative, for our knowledge of ancient music is only sketchy. Russell cites some recent articles on the passage.

The Greek word we have translated as "principal melody" always refers in Longinus to the sound emanating from either a human voice or a musical instrument.

**pralltrillers:** in music these are notes played at a higher pitch than the notes of the melody ("the principal melody"), partly as variation, partly as accompaniment. The English technical term "pralltriller" is approximate in meaning: a pralltriller is an inverted mordent, that is, it rises above the main note, whereas a mordent goes below it. An analogy can be found in the "figuration" or "ornamentation" performed by such masters as Handel and Mozart; in surviving musical scores this is sketched in only the slightest terms, for the eighteenth century masters often improvised their accompaniments.

Such accompanying trills may be one note or several, just as a periphrasis may be one word (*e.g.,* Dante's "Another" for "God": see above) or several.

**ornamental effect:** Longinus says that the general effect of periphrasis is ornamental effect (see ch. 23); such emphasis would not exclude the effects of "emotion" and "greatness" listed by Tiberius (see above, n. on **periphrasis**). Throughout these middle chapters, the word "ornamental effect" is used to suggest, periphrastically, the combination of "emotion and sublimity." In the opening line of this chapter, Longinus remarks that no one doubts that periphrasis contributes to the sublime.

**blown up and unrefined:** the word "blown up" looks back to the image of the flautist who blew at top breath in an effort to be sublime (3.2), with its attendant notions of "paratragic," "swelling," and bombast. The word "unrefined" in Greek literally means "lacking in the 'muse' and in music"; it is a pun, since "music" in antiquity covered both musical and cultural activities.

We may now put the parts of the analogy together: pralltrillers are to the melody as periphrasis is to standard speech. Just as the "figuration" and "ornamentation" performed by virtuosi like Handel and Mozart enhanced their melodic lines, so periphrasis enhances normal ways of saying things. The analogy breaks down at one point, and just because it does break down the analogy becomes clearer. In music one does not have pralltrillers or figuration or ornamentation without a melody; in literature, however, the standard way of saying things is not voiced—although the reader must carry it in his mind as he reads the periphrasis.

As usual, Longinus cautions against excess; we are familiar with "show-offs" whose concern for the ornamentation is greater than for the melody. A striking example of such excess for comic purposes is Mable's endless coloratura in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance.*

Plato, in the introduction to his Funeral Oration:

> And indeed they have from us what is their due, and having gotten it, they go on their assigned passage, escorted by the whole city in common, and privately each by his kinfolk.

Now, then, death he has said to be an "assigned passage," and their getting what is considered the custom in these matters he has said to be a kind of public ceremonial escort by the fatherland. Indeed, has he emboldened the conception in a measured way by these words? Or—having assumed a bare style in speaking and writing—has he made it melodic, pouring around it, like a harmony, the melodiousness of periphrasis? 3. And Xenophon says:

> You consider toil to be the leader of a pleasant life; and you have received into your souls the finest and most warlike possession of all, for you rejoice more in being praised than in everything else.

**Funeral Oration:** Plato's *Menexenus* (236D); perhaps Longinus chose his first example from this famous imaginary funeral oration as a piece of wit. In the *Menexenus,* Socrates says that it is easy to write funeral orations, and promptly proceeds to do so. The tone of the dialogue is unclear, for the epideictic funeral oration is too good just to be parody.

**public ceremonial escort by the fatherland:** a magnificent periphrasis in the form of a periphrasis; Longinus does Plato one better. For Plato's word "escorted" Longinus substitutes the noun "ceremonial escort." For Plato's "in common" Longinus substitutes "public." And for Plato's "city" Longinus substitutes "fatherland."

Periphrases for death are common and range from the ridiculous to the sublime, *e.g.,* "he kicked the bucket" or "pushing up daisies" to Hamlet's famous phrase (III.i): "The undiscovered country from whose bourne/No traveller returns." As Henn remarks (p. 60), "There is no suggestion whatever of *equivalence* of meaning in the periphrasis"; we do not just "add dignity, but ...invoke a new series of attitudes to the thought."

**melodic:** among late rhetoricians, the word refers to writing that is particularly rhythmical and musical (Athenaeus 14.632d). By using it here Longinus sustains both his periphrastic note and his musical analogy.

**Xenophon says:** from the *Education of Cyrus* (1.5.12). The passage is epideictic and encomiastic in nature, like a funeral oration. Such speeches allowed for more poetic style than courtroom speeches.

**You consider. . .pleasant life:** Russell

Instead of having said, "You want to toil," he says "You make toil the leader of a pleasant life," and by similarly stretching out the other parts of the sentence, he has added to his praise a great perception. 4. And this passage of Herodotus is inimitable:

> On the Scythians who plundered her temple the goddess cast a female disease.

remarks on the "curious inconsistency"; having just quoted the text, Longinus mixes paraphrase with quotation in singling out phrases for comment. Probably Longinus was led into the alteration by the structure of his own sentence and his desire for parallelism; critics are often trapped into this habit. Of course, there were no standards, or standard forms, for quotations in antiquity.

**inimitable:** Longinus, having imitated and emulated the periphrases in Plato and Xenophon, topping theirs with his own, now apparently despairs of capping Herodotus. The passage, from Herodotus 1.105, discusses the impotency which the Greeks found prevalent among the Scythians; it is studied medically in Hippocrates' *Airs, Waters, Places* (22).

**On the Scythians...female disease:** Herodotus' wording is full of jokes.

The phrase "female disease" is more pregnant with meaning for the Greeks than for us, since, at the time of Herodotus, at least, they did not believe the woman to be more than a receptacle for the male seed. Such is the basis of Apollo's defense of Orestes from the charge of having slain a blood-kin, in Aeschylus' play the *Eumenides*. Moreover, the phrase is an almost genteel periphrasis for the normal way of referring to impotence; what this was can be found in Tiberius' book *On Figures* (Spengel III.76), for the quotation from Herodotus is a stock example. There Tiberius says Herodotus wrote this periphrasis instead of "she made them androgynes or fractured." The example lingers on as late as the Venerable Bede, who cites it in his book *On Tropes* (Halm, p. 614) as a periphrasis or circumlocution for the purpose of avoiding vulgarity. Some of the jokes in the quotation cannot be duplicated in English. For example, in the words translated "the goddess" Herodotus has put the feminine article with the masculine form for "god." It is no wonder that Longinus thought the Herodotean passage "inimitable."

Chapter 29

## Excessive Periphrasis

SURELY periphrasis is a business open to disaster, more than the other figures, if one does not take it up in moderation; you see, it immediately falls into feebleness, smacking of light-mindedness and coarseness; this is why they even scoff at Plato (he is over and over again powerful at the figure, even if he does use it in some places at the wrong moment) when in the *Laws* he says:

> We must allow neither silvern nor golden wealth to reside in our city

so that if he had kept men from obtaining cattle, it is clear that he would have spoken of "ovine and bovine wealth."

**open to disaster:** the word is generally medical; as this is the only use by Longinus, we can assume he intended the medical sense, especially since it serves as a transition from the "female disease" with which he closed the preceding chapter to the "disease" of bad periphrasis. For the use of "disease" as a metaphor for vice, see the use of such words in 44.6.

**smacking of light-mindedness:** the verb "smack" can refer either to a sweet smell or a stink. The term "light-mindedness" refers in its rhetorical sense to an attempt at great writing which is banal and preposterous. The translators differ: "empty talk" (Roberts); "trifling" (Prickard); "hollow talk" (Grube); "empty phrases" (Russell); "empty chatter" (Dorsch).

**coarseness:** the Greek word is *pachys*, from which we get one of the roots of "pachyderm," that is, elephant (lit., "thick and coarse-skinned"). In Greek the word can be applied to trees, ankles, rich soil, the flesh of a pig, a coarsely woven cloak, curdled or clotted liquids, coarse speech, and a stupid man.

**Laws:** the passage comes from Book 7 (801B) of Plato's last and longest work, which constitutes one-fifth of his corpus. The word "silvern" gets some of the hyper-poetic quality of Plato's diction, though "golden" in English is not at all unusual.

**cattle. . .'ovine and bovine wealth':** In Greek the word for cattle is cognate with the word "bovine," and so the sting in the irony is greater than in English. The words "bovine" and "ovine" are, fortunately, nice equivalents for the Greek.

Longinus twice attributes the jibe to others; either he wished to give credit to

2. But this philological parenthesis on the use of figures for sublime effect is enough, my dearest Terentianus; all these things make speeches and writings turn out more emotional and more sympathetically exciting; and emotion has a part in sublimity to the same extent that characterization has in pleasing touches.

others (even anonymously) or—because of his own admiration for Plato—to recognize his faults without himself damning him.

**emotion has a part. . .in pleasing touches:** Longinus sums up his analysis of figures: use of figures contributes to emotion, and since emotion contributes to sublimity, figures will produce sublimity to the degree that they have evoked and enhanced emotion. If the figures fail in tension, if they strain too much and collapse into what evokes laughter, they will not produce emotion and will not contribute to sublimity. Chapter 29 serves to make this point by both analysis and example.

Longinus had closed ch. 9 with a comparison of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, in which the principal point is that the *Odyssey* is marked by its emphasis on *characterization*, caused by a decline in Homer's *emotion*. And emotion and characterization are two of the four terms he uses in summing up the part played by figures in sublimity here at the end of the parenthesis (29.2):

emotion has a part in sublimity to
the same
extent that characterization has in
pleasing touches.

Awareness of the linking of emotion and characterization will clarify the seemingly cryptic abruptness of the analogy which concludes this chapter. And, in addition, it will serve as a transition to the next set of chapters, which deal with the fourth item on the list given in 8.1: diction. The present contrast of emotion and characterization alludes to the so-called "characters of style." This topic—the subject of an enormous literature—is treated with admirable lucidity by Russell in his introduction (esp. p. xxxvi, where he has charted the salient features of each style); for now it will suffice to say that the three styles were, under a variety of terms, the low, the middle, and the high: each had its assigned function, its principal exemplars, and its attendant vices. Thus the low style was appropriate for teaching; its exemplars were Lysias and Xenophon; its vices were a certain dry and bloodless dullness. The middle style was appropriate for pleasing touches; its exemplars were Isocrates and Herodotus; its vice was a kind of diluted expansiveness. The high style was appropriate for the purpose of rousing the emotions; its exemplars were Gorgias and Thucydides; and its vices were those catalogued by Longinus in chs. 3-4: swelling and false wit.

Clearly the best style—for sublimity—would combine the virtues of the middle and high styles without any of their attendant vices. Although Longinus, with his characteristic originality, does not utilize these traditional terminologies, he has them in mind as he marks out his own definitions and terms. Hence he can draw his illustrations, for both virtues and vices, from authors who range across all three styles. Most conspicuously he finds no examples of the sublime in the writers of comedy,

especially the kind of comedy which stressed characterization, for its end was only the pleasure of pleasing touches. It is for this reason that he makes his analogy:

$$\frac{\text{emotion}}{\text{sublimity}} :: \frac{\text{characterization}}{\text{pleasing touches}}$$

He prizes figures only to the extent that they contribute to emotion, that constituent of sublimity which Caecilius omitted and which Longinus felt to be of major importance even if it was not essential.

## Chapter 30

# Selection of Words

SINCE, certainly, the conception of a speech and writing and its phrasing are often thoroughly blended, each into the other, let us see also whether anything about phrasing has been left out for us to deal with. Now, though the selection of the most important words wonderfully stirs and enchants those who hear them, and though it is the highest practice in all public speakers and prose-writers, by itself enabling speeches and writ-

Here, in ch. 30, Longinus is tying the first part of his fivefold division (8.1) together with the fourth part: conception and phrasing. Although conception can exist without speech, it cannot of course exist without words: even in the famous example of Ajax's silence we had to be told that he was silent in some kind of diction.

Because conception and phrasing are so interlaced, Longinus has necessarily discussed parts of phrasing already, *e.g.*, periphrasis (lit., "phrasing around"). It was probably this etymological wordplay that led him to close the parenthesis on figures with a discussion of periphrasis. The opening sentence of ch. 30, then, is a casually and intricately graceful "ploy" or transition from figures to phrasing, and with his customary pretence of academic diffidence Longinus suggests that there may be nothing more to say even as he promises that there is much more.

For some of the later authors of rhetorical handbooks "phrasing" is a comprehensive term for the combination of diction and syntax (see Spengel I.458; II.507; III.191). It is thus like our English derivative "phrase" as in "Didn't he phrase that beautifully?" In 8.1, Longinus had listed it as the fourth of the parts which make up sublimity: a noble phrasing, the parts of which are 1) the selection of words and 2) the turn of mannerism and "made up elaboration" of "style." Style, for Longinus, is really style of diction. Diction is a subdivision of phrasing. It is these two he is about to discuss.

**Now, though the selection:** this sentence is a subtle example of *praeteritio,* that is, calling attention to something by saying that you are not going to mention it. Longinus, characteristically, defers to his reader's superiority while displaying his own. The points made are all important and need to be made; they are at once commonplaces and yet phrased with an intricate art and a combination of original and traditional diction that make it both "superfluous" and "not superfluous" to go through—even for those who know. Platonism glints throughout the passage like the lustre that comes from old words, especially in the phrase "setting a kind of vocal soul in things."

ings to flower in greatness, with (all at the same time) fineness, patina, weightiness, strength, power, and, besides, a kind of lustre, just as we find in the finest statues, setting, as it were, a kind of vocal soul in things—perhaps, for those who understand, it may be superfluous to go through all this. Fine words, you see, are thought's own light. 2. But, of course, a bold diction is not useful everywhere, since to place great and impressive words around petty matters would appear to be just like putting a tragic mask on an infant

**flower:** Longinus here presents a pretty picture: the rare old poetic words will bloom along the rows of lines in the text like blossoms in a garden. The use of the word is an example of itself.

**patina:** the Greek word means, literally, "good dirt" and refers to that mellow lustre which age lends to certain kinds of surfaces. When transferred to the critical vocabulary of literature, it suggests the quality of archaic or "old world" charm which we find in writers of a bygone period. Hence a later writer may, by selecting words characteristic of that period, transfer some of that patina to his own style. Signs reading "Ye Olde English Tea Shoppe" are feeble attempts to acquire this quality. Spenser was well aware of the value to be acquired from old words, both in theory and practice: in the epistle to Gabriel Harvey by Spenser's learned (and imaginary?) friend E. K. we read:

> the which, of many things which in him be straunge, I know will seeme the straungest, the words them selves being so auncient. . . And firste of the wordes to speake, I graunt they be something hard, and of most men unused, yet both English, and also used to most excellent authors and most famous poetes.

There follows a long and elaborate defence of the "Chaucerisms." Spenser did not know Longinus, but he found parallel justifications in Cicero.

When Lang, Leaf, and Myers did their famous translation of Homer in the nineteenth century, they turned both to the Bible and to Malory for much of their style of diction.

**Fine words. . .thought's own light:** Longinus follows his long and complex sentence with a short and epigrammatic one, couched memorably in a metaphor, like the comparable line in 9.1: "Sublimity is the resonance of a great mind." There is, as Russell and Einarson observe (following Immisch) probably an allusion to the supposed etymology of "voice (*phone*)" as coming from "light of thought (*phos nou*)." One might almost construct a metaphorical climax or sorites: fine words are the lustrous voice of thought; the lustrous voice of thought is the resonance of a great mind; the resonance of a great mind is sublimity. Once again Longinus links what came before the parenthesis on figures with what comes after, both in the parallel metaphors and in the Platonic allusions to the birth of ideas ("pregnancy" in 9.1; the implanting of a "vocal soul" in 30.1).

The image "light of thought" appears in the *Art of Rhetoric* by Cassius Longinus (Spengel I.304): concepts and arguments are like that light which

child, except that in poetry and hist. . .

*(a lacuna of about 4 leaves [about 8 pages or 8%] occurs here)*

reveals to the judges the persuasiveness of the proof.

**infant child:** we use "infant child" because in English "infant" suggests newborn babies, whereas the Greek word can be used of slightly older children, like the French *enfant*. The image is a common one: Russell lists the various parallels from Philodemus, Quintilian, and Lucian.

**hist:** The Greek ms. breaks off just after the "Iota," but it seems clear that the word "history" was intended.

For extreme examples of dressing minor material in the trappings and suits of over-poetic diction, see Lucian's *Lexiphanes* or—in English—Oscar Wilde's poem *The Sphinx;* Wilde went about among his friends for days collecting rare and unusual words to put into the poem. A specimen will show the result (69-72):

> Whose wings, like strange transparent talc, rose high above his hawk-faced head,
> Painted with silver and with red and ribbed with rods of Oreichalch?
> Or did huge Apis from his car leap down and lay before your feet
> Big blossoms of the honey-sweet and honey-coloured nenuphar?

Swinburne's self-parody (*Nephelidia*) contains specimens of the vice:

> From the depths of a dreamy decline of the dawn through a notable nimbus of nebulous moonshine. . .
> Bathed in the balms of beatified bliss, beatific itself by beatitude's breath. . .
> Made meek as a mother whose bosom-beats bound with the bliss-bringing bulk of a balm-breathing baby.

But even major poets are often guilty of diction which does not ring true as they strive to intensify their emotions and moods. Here, for example, is a passage from Keats' *Lamia* (155-63):

> A deep volcanian yellow took the place
> Of all her milder-mooned body's grace;
> And, as the lava ravishes the mead. . .
> she was undressed
> Of all her sapphires, greens, and amethysts,
> And rubious-argent. . .

In addition to the spurious diction of "volcanian," "milder-mooned," "ravishes," and "rubious-argent," we may apply another Longinian criterion: having made "sapphire," "green," and "amethyst" all poetic plurals, even Keats balked at pluralizing "rubious-argent."

Chapter 31

# Colloquial Idioms

. . .most nourishing and fertile,

and that line of Anacreon's:

No longer do I turn for the Thracian filly.

In the same way, this passage from Theopompus is to be praised; in my opinion, he has put it most expressively because of the proportion, which Caecilius (I don't understand why) downgrades. Theopompus says:

**most nourishing and fertile:** the text picks up in the middle of a sentence, after the lacuna. Missing in the lacuna is Longinus' treatment of the first subdivision of "phrasing," which he had called "the selection of words" (see ch. 8; also ch. 30). By the end of the lacuna he is discussing the second subdivision, itself divided into two parts, "trope" and "made up elaboration" of style in diction.

Ch. 31 deals with the vigor and vitality to be gained from a judicious use of colloquial language.

**of Anacreon's:** because the text is corrupt, we cannot be sure where the quotation begins; the fragment is #196 (Bergk.)

Anacreon was a sixth century B.C. lyric poet, known especially for his light-heartedness and wit.

**the proportion:** we would say "metaphor," which Aristotle defines (*Poetics* 1457b7 ff.) as a transfer of an alien word either from species to genus or from species to species or by "analogy." Here Longinus has used the Greek word for "analogy," and in doing so has made an academic joke: he has transferred the word for one of Aristotle's species to the genus. The joke is further complicated by the standard definition of metaphor given in the rhetorical handbooks (*e.g.*, Spengel III. 191, 208, 228, 232, 245): a use of a non-standard for a standard word.

Metaphors are reduced analogies, in which only two of the four relevant terms are used. For example, from the proportion

$$\frac{\text{evening}}{\text{day}} :: \frac{\text{old age}}{\text{life}}$$

we may derive two metaphors—the evening of life and the old age of day. In Theopompus' metaphor the four relevant terms are

$$\frac{\text{Philip's mind}}{\text{unpalatable words}} :: \frac{\text{Philip's stomach}}{\text{unpalatable food}}$$

**Theopompus:** an historian of the fourth century B.C., brother of a rheto-

> Philip was powerful at stomaching things.

Such a colloquial idiom by its own nature is sometimes more clearly suggestive than an ornamental effect: you see, it is understood at once as coming from common life, and what is familiar is more convincing. Now, then, in the case of a man who prevails by enduring shameful and sordid things patiently and with pleasure for the sake of his acquisitiveness, the phrase "stomaching things" is most vividly envisioned. 2. The Herodotean expressions also have, in a way, the same effect:

> Cleomenes, being mad, hacked his flesh to bits with a dagger until, making mincemeat of his whole body, he perished,

and

> Pythes fought on the ship until he was butchered.

These things almost brush against the edge of vulgarity but because of their expressiveness are not vulgar.

rician, and a pupil of Isocrates. His work survives only in fragments. Dionysius of Halicarnassus says that he was the best of Isocrates' pupils and that he was the first historian worthy of praise from a rhetorical point of view—a damning indictment by today's definition of an historian.

Demetrius (*On Style* 75) remarks that Theopompus says powerful things in a way that is not powerful; in a later paragraph (240) he supports the charge: although Theopompus brought into a particular description such items as flute-girls, brothels, and men singing and dancing there, he only *seems* to be powerful, but really speaks feebly.

**colloquial idiom:** colloquial idioms would be part of "standard ways of saying things," but a "low" way. Such language was, of course, legitimate in comedy or in parts of the Platonic dialogues. Its function was smaller in formal rhetoric. It is to Longinus' credit that he does not consistently observe such a refined and fastidious decorum as led Pope to object to Homer's mention of vomit and flies or Johnson to censure Shakespeare's use of the word "knife."

Earthy and colloquial language, which generally conveys a speaker's sincerity, carries conviction and hence is a kind of proof or assurance. Speakers who use such language either are, or seem to be, of a character whose sincerity we trust.

**the same effect:** the first passage is condensed from Herodotus 6.75, the second from 7.181. Both colloquial idioms are just like those in English: "making mince-meat" and "butchered."

Chapter 32

## Number and Use of Tropes

BUT concerning the number of metaphors, Caecilius is like a man who has set himself down with those who have set it as a rule that two or, at the most three are to be arranged in the same passage. Demosthenes, you see, is the norm in such matters: the right moment for their use comes when the emotions sweep themselves like a winter's torrential flood and drag with them, as a necessity, a polymultiplicity of metaphors. He says:

> 2. Men, disgusting flatterers, each mutilating his fatherland, who drank away their freedom in toasts to Philip first and now to Alexander, measuring their happiness by their bellies and most shameless appetites, having overturned the liberty and freedom from despots which were, to the earlier Greeks, the norms and standards of what is good.

Here the animus of the public speaker against traitors occults the number of

**set himself down with:** the verb is probably a kind of Platonic joke: there are critics, who, like Plato's Lawgiver, "set it down as a rule" that two or three successive metaphors are all that can be allowed. A comparable joke today might be to refer to one of the influential and dogmatic schools of criticism—say the Chicago school or the New Critics—as "that academy" of critics, where "Academy" would be an allusion to the French Academy. Since Caecilius censured Plato (see above), the Platonic echo is amusing.

**polymultiplicity:** the original word is not classical Greek; Longinus uses it only here, and it would appear to indicate with comic vehemence his disagreement with the "lawgivers" who allow "only two or, at most, three" successive metaphors.

**He says:** from Demosthenes, *On the Crown* 296. When Hamlet soliloquizes (III.1) on whether to commit suicide, he moves from "slings and arrows" to a "sea of troubles"—but only captious critics object to the catachresis (violent metaphor) in "taking up arms against a sea of troubles," for Hamlet's despair sweeps along all who hear the speech.

**occults:** the Greek word, like the English verb "occult," is a technical term in astronomy used to indicate what one body does when it eclipses another. It would itself appear to be a bold meta-

the tropes. 3. For this reason Aristotle and Theophrastus say that expressions like "just as if" and "as it were" and "if one ought to say it in this manner" and "if one were to run the risk of speaking thus" are mollifiers of

phor with no "mollifier." (See below, note on **mollifying**.) But Dio Cassius (60.26) reports that an eclipse was expected to occur on Claudius' birthday (45 A.D.) and that Claudius, in order to obviate any superstitious disturbance, issued a *publicly* scientific explanation of the phenomenon. In Dio's lengthy citation of the explanation, a cognate of the verb "occult" appears. Such information was, then, public and, perhaps, common knowledge by the middle of the first century A.D. For this reason it is possible that Longinus may not have felt the image a bold one.

**tropes:** see ch. 8, n. on **figures.** This is Longinus' generic term for metaphors.

**Aristotle and Theophrastus:** we do not have in the extant works of Aristotle or Theophrastus any passage which makes this point specifically. Aristotle does lay down the general rule under which such a special point would come (*Rhetoric* 1408b2): "The remedy for every excess is well known: to censure oneself at the same time."

**mollifiers:** the Greek word may itself be a metaphor, since it is used of things like the scraps fed to appease a dog's hunger, of propitiatory offerings to the dead, of a soothing song, like a lullaby, and of someone who is a "darling" to another. As with the subtleties of Greek rhythm, so with the subtleties of Greek metaphor: why the Greeks and the Romans thought some metaphors so bold that devices for softening or mollifying them were needed is, at this point in our analyses of classical literature, impossible to say. As soon as indices to authors such as Plato and Aristotle are compiled, we can begin to tabulate the examples of each and study them to see whether there are patterns of usage.

If we inspect Longinus' own use of such phrases, we find a definite tendency to use them with language of two kinds: (1) technical terms, words drawn from levels of discourse that are outside normal literate speech, *e.g.*, "untreated wool" (15.5); a die or stamp used in minting (22.1); tattoo-marks or spots on skin (43.3); cracks in walls caused by cold (10.7); pegs or nails (41.3). Other uses are with paradoxical expressions (a vocal soul: 30.1) and with rare and poetic phrases "taken over by Apollo" (8.4 and 16.2).

On the other hand, as if to "show off" the point of this chapter, Longinus uses several bold expressions, or so we would judge, though of course, we have no way of telling—with no qualifying phrases of any kind, *e.g.*, "occults."

Contemporary English is not so given to such formal mollifiers as "as it were," "so to speak," and "if I may venture to say," for its addiction to metaphor is inherent. Poets, of course, are freer than public speakers: Aeschylean and Shakespearian images are often dense and even grotesque; nor can we imagine Donne saying

> So, as 'twere, t'entergraft our hands

or

> pictures—if I may put it this
> way—in our eye to get.

Dryden, in the preface to *The State of Innocence*, comments similarly on some lines of Cowley:

> The valley, now, this monster

metaphors; their self-assessment, they say, is a cure for their audacity. 4. I too admit this view; all the same, I say what I said in dealing with figures, that intense emotion, put in at the right moment, and a nobly bred sublimity are a kind of appropriate cure for the number and audacity of metaphors because their rushing impulsiveness naturally sweeps and pushes everything before it—but, even more, they actually exact the asides as something necessary and do not allow the audience to have the leisure to

seem'd to fill:
And we, methought, look'd up
to him from our hill.

The words *seemed* and *methought* have mollified the figure. Crevecoeur (Letter 8) writes "the market-place, which is (if I may be allowed the expression) the coffee-house of the town." In contemporary writing, the devices most commonly used to mollify a piece of technical jargon or a bold metaphor or a colloquialism are the quotation mark or italic type. For example:

1. "I remember how I suddenly dropped, sank upon the edge of the bed from the force of the idea that he must know how he really, as they say, 'had' me."
   Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*, ch. 11; James also uses the phrase "as they say."

2. In the field of seventeenth-century studies, conceptions as to what was 'the climate of opinion' or 'world picture' have not provided. . .
   Helen Gardner, *The Business of Criticism*, p. 147.

3. It is the face of a man who is always fighting against something, but who fights in the open and is not frightened, the face of a man who is *generously angry*—in other words. . .
   George Orwell, *Charles Dickens* Section Six

Orwell's little additional phrase "in other words" may be a kind of mollifier.

**self-assessment. . .audacity:** the reference is to estimating one's own tax liability; the mollifier is, so to speak, the tax on the metaphor. Longinus adds also a medical metaphor to his sentence, in the word "cure."

**asides:** the term was used earlier (22.4) in the discussion of transpositions. It denotes what we call an "aside," a remark "thrown in by the way," suddenly and informally, as if the speaker's mind saw an immediate point as he was speaking and uttered it under the pressure of the insight. Such a device takes the audience into the speaker's confidence, as if he were willing to allow those who heard him to enter the workshop of his mind to "see how he does it." The Greek term suggests actions and words that are bold, almost reckless—our phrase "saying whatever is on the mind"—and thus indicates the immediacy of emotion.

**do not allow the audience:** Hume (Essay XIII, *Of Eloquence*) simply paraphrases this passage, for by the middle of the eighteenth century Longinian doctrines were as much a part and parcel of educated minds as Darwinian or Freudian doctrines are in us:

The [the ancient orators] hurried away with such a torrent of the sublime and the pathetic that they

scrutinize the number of metaphors because they become enthusiastic along with the speaker. 5. But, in fact, in addressing oneself to commonplaces, and in descriptions, nothing is so thoroughly expressive as continuous tropes, one after the other. By means of these, the anatomy of the human tabernacle is ceremoniously paraded in Xenophon, and is still more divinely painted in Plato. He says that the head is its acropolis, the neck is

> left their hearers no leisure to perceive the artifice by which they were deceived. Nay, to consider the matter aright, they were not deceived by any artifice. The orator, by the force of his own genius and eloquence, first inflamed himself with anger, indignation, pity, sorrow; and then communicated these impetuous movements to his audience.

See ch. 39, n. on **communion.**

**human tabernacle:** cf. Thoreau, *Walden* (ch. "Higher Laws"):

> Every man is the builder of a temple, called his body, to the god he worships, after a style purely his own, nor can he get off by hammering marble instead. We are all sculptors and painters, and our material is our flesh and blood and bones. Any nobleness begins at once to refine a man's features, any meanness or sensuality to imbrute them.

**ceremoniously:** in the manner of a ceremonial or "pomp" or epideictic speech.

**in Xenophon:** from *Memorabilia* 1.4.5 ff. This is a famous example of teleological anatomizing, influential throughout antiquity and the Renaissance. Russell cites the references to modern scholarship on the subject. Lactantius (*On the Workmanship of God*) works out the image extensively, as do Phineas Fletch (*The Purple Island*), Francis Quarles (*Divine Frances* I.42 "On the Body of Man") and Spenser in *The Faerie Queene* (II.ix.20 ff.). A passage from Spenser will show an allegorical treatment of the idea; in stanza 32, Spenser treats the excremental system of the body in a way which would have merited praise from Longinus for its elegant discretion:

> But all the liquor, which was foul and waste,
> Not good nor serviceable elles for aught,
> They in another great round vessel placed,
> Till by a conduit pipe it thence were brought.
> And all the rest that noyous was and nought,
> By secret ways, that none might it espy,
> Was close conveyed and to the back gate brought,
> That cleped was Port Esquiline, whereby
> It was avoided quite, and thrown out privily.

Perhaps, however, Longinus would have censured "privily" as "undergraduate humor" and false wit. (The passage is quoted from the edition by Robert Kellogg and Oliver Steele [New York: Odyssey Press, 1965]).

**in Plato:** in the *Timaeus* 65C-85C. Longinus has paraphrased and abridged

constructed like an isthmus between it and the chest, and the vertebrae he says underprop it like pivots; pleasure is for men a bait for vice; the tongue is what delivers opinions on taste; and the heart is a knot of veins and the spring of the blood as it is vigorously carried around, having been placed on duty in the guardhouse of the body; and his word for the courses of the passageways is alleys; "the gods," he says, "having devised the idea of the lungs as an aid to the leaping of the heart in its expectation of powerful enemies and in its animus when it is worked up—since it is very fervent—planted lungs in the body, for they are soft and bloodless and have cavities within, as a sort of cushion, so that the seething animus of a human being may leap and throb against something yielding and not be spoiled"; and the house of cravings he speaks of as the women's quarters, that of the animus as the men's quarters; in fact the spleen is the napkin of the inner parts, so that when it is filled with what has been purged from them, it develops into a great festering. "After this," he says, "the gods canopied all the body with flesh, and the flesh was set up against things coming from outside as a defense, like felt"; and the blood, he said, was the pabulum of the flesh: "For the sake of nourishment," he says, "they channelled it throughout the body, just as if cutting irrigation channels in gardens, so that as from an ongoing stream—the body being a narrow tunnel—the streams of the veins might flow." And when our last day stands before us, the cables of the soul (as though the soul were a ship) are loosed, and the soul itself is let to go free. 6. These and tens of thousands of related ones are consistent; but what I have already cited is ample to show that tropes are great by nature and that metaphors contribute to sublimity and that emotional and expressive passages for the most part delight by means of these. 7. But certainly, that the use of tropes—as of all fine things in speeches and writings—over and over again falls into excess is now clear, even if I do not say it. On these grounds they even ridicule Plato, and him not least, as if he were often carried away by a kind of Dionysic revelry in his

heavily. We have put in quotation marks only those words which seem to be the ones Plato himself used.

**lungs:** Aristotle rejects the explanation, with an apparent allusion to the Platonic passage, in *The History of Animals* 669a14 ff. The "leaping" and "throbbing" of the heart, says Aristotle, is restricted almost exclusively to man, for he is virtually the only animal who experiences both prospect and expectation.

**channels in gardens:** the Platonic image, cited here in a long series of direct and submerged quotations, turned up earlier, in ch. 13. Aristotle adopts the image and works it out at clinical

speeches and writings into harsh and undiluted metaphors and into allegorical mouthings. He says:

> It is not easy to think that a city ought to be mixed like a bowl of wine, where the maddened wine seethes once poured in, but when curtailed by another and sobering god, having taken on fine company, it produces a good and moderate drink.

You see, they say that speaking of water as a "sober god" and of mixing as "curtailing" is the mark of one who is in reality a poet, and not a sober one. 8. And turning his hands to such defects, Caecilius has actually had

length in *The History of Animals* 668a11 ff.

**harsh:** a word associated with the austere and rough style, especially that of Thucydides (see Russell for citation). "Harsh" modifies "style," which in Greek (*lexis*) covers both "style" and "diction." Perhaps Longinus' use of the word helps explains why Johnson censured the "diction" of *Lycidas* as "harsh" (*Lives of the Poets,* Milton). For Longinus, the fourth of his five elements of sublimity (ch. 8) was "phrasing," which consisted both of "the choice of words" and *lexis* (diction and style).

**undiluted:** the word refers to the drinking of wine undiluted by water; such wine naturally led quickly to intoxication or "dionysic revelry." In view of the coming quotation, Longinus' metaphor is apt; it is, perhaps, still another exemplification of the vice under discussion.

**He says:** from the *Laws,* 773C-D. We, too, would classify this as a conceit, and a grotesque one, for the image calls attention to itself. One may say of such passages what Johnson said of the Metaphysical poets (*Lives of the Poets: Cowley*):

> In the mass of materials which ingenious absurdity has thrown together, genuine wit and useful knowledge may be sometimes found, buried perhaps in grossness of expression, but useful to those who know their value; and such as, when they are expanded to perspicuity, and polished to elegance, may give lustre to works which have more propriety though less copiousness of sentiment.

No passage in Johnson, or in the eighteenth century, so betrays the absorbed influence of Longinus as the opening pages describing the general characteristics of the Metaphysical poets.

**actually:** The point is that Caecilius cannot find anything more than defects of this trivial sort and still has the nerve to rate Lysias higher than Plato. After such a splendid and sublime example of continuous metaphors, such as Longinus just paraphrased in Plato's anatomy of the human tabernacle, a defect like this is minor. And minor blemishes, as Longinus keeps saying, and as

the overconfidence, in his prose account of Lysias, to use two uncritical emotions as he offers to explain that Lysias is in every way better than Plato. You see, though he loves Lysias as he does not even love himself, Caecilius still hates Plato in every way more than he loves Lysias. In fact he hates out of a love for contention, and what he has set down as premises are not, as he thought, agreed to. He thinks he is preferring a public speaker without mistakes and pure of defects to Plato, who was often thoroughly mistaken; but the matter was not at all like this, not even close to it.

he will discuss in the next three chapters, are not enough to lessen the greatness of true sublimity.

**prose account of Lysias:** we do not know what work this was; Russell thinks it was a separate treatise. Photius (cited by Russell) summarizes what Caecilius said: that Lysias' economy was not up to his originality.

**two uncritical emotions:** Russell remarks: "translators hedge here"; the phrase is difficult. The renderings: "blind impulses of passion" (Roberts); "mixing up two different feelings" (Prickard); "two uncritical passions" (Grube); "given way without discrimination to two emotions" (Russell); "two uncritical impulses" (Dorsch). The two emotions are made clear in what follows: love for himself and Lysias, hate for Plato. With "uncritical," Longinus probably has in mind a pun on this uncritical critic Caecilius, who is prey to his emotions—the very subject he omitted from his "prose-piece" on the sublime.

**love of contention:** the only other time Longinus uses this expression is of Plato (13.4), whom he described as "too much a lover of contention" with Homer. But where this vice led Plato to success, it leads Caecilius to uncritical judgements.

**set down as premises:** Caecilius, says Longinus, had "uncritical emotions" for his real premises; on the basis of these, it appears, he undertook to censure Plato and exalt Lysias in the customary critical terms of rhetoric. Longinus has, in his long parenthesis on figures, analyzed and exhibited the proper way to apply the technical terminology; in specifying the "uncritical emotions" which were Caecilius' real premises and principles, he is hinting at true ones. These he will take up in ch. 35. In between, as a second parenthesis, he puts a comparison of Hyperides and Demosthenes, in order to show how criticism based on the technical terms alone should be conducted. How strongly he felt on the point can be seen in the sentence which concludes this chapter: "but the matter is not at all like this, not even close to it."

**pure:** although Longinus is often a Platonist, he is not scrupulously so; purity is not, for him, a supreme virtue. See ch. 35.

## Chapter 33

# Whether Excellence with Faults is Better than Faultless Mediocrity

COME, let us take a kind of prose-writer who is in reality pure and without reproof. Is it not worthwhile to investigate this problem in general terms—whether poems and speeches and writings which have greatness in some parts but are thoroughly mistaken in others are ever better than those which are moderate in correctness though everywhere sound and

**in reality:** Longinus does not come to this unblemished author until ch. 34. The delay in naming him is partly rhetorical strategy, partly a philosophic need to discuss the general proposition before the particular example.

Caecilius himself found fault with the disposition of Lysias; Longinus will go him one better by taking Hyperides as his exemplar of the faultless style.

Perhaps the jokes which Longinus makes about Archilochus and his *anomy* ("rulelessness") are a glancing reminder of Caecilius' verdict on the "e*co*nomy" of Lysias. If so, Longinus assumes a fairly great familiarity with the writings of Caecilius, who does appear often in Spengel's index as an authority quoted by later rhetoricians.

**correctness:** as an ideal, "correctness" is Augustan—both Roman and English: the young Alexander Pope, seeking guidance from William Walsh, who had in turn sought guidance as a fledgling poet from Dryden, received this advice from Walsh, which may well stand as the paradigm of eighteenth century poetics (Pope's account is in James M. Osborn's edition of Joseph Spence, *Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters of Books and Men* [Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968] 73):

> He [Walsh] used to encourage me much, and used to tell me, that there was one way left to excelling: for though we had several great poets, we never had one great poet that was correct; and he desired me to make that my study and aim.

Critics in the eighteenth century recognized, of course, the relationship between correctness and genius. Addison, for example, in *Spectator* 160, discusses men of "natural" genius, "who by the mere strength of natural parts, and without any assistance of art or learning, have produced works that were the delight of their own times and the wonder of posterity." Homer and the Bible, he says, "very much failed in, or, if you will. . .were much above the nicety and correctness of the moderns." He gives as examples of such natural genius Pindar and Shakespeare. We need not, of course, take Addison's examples literally: "without any assistance of art or learning" applies to neither author. Of Shakespeare, however, we may at least say what Jonson said, that his Greek and Latin training were small in comparison to the almost technical proficiency which Jonson

faultless? And, too (heaven knows), should the more numerous excellences in speeches and writings justifiably carry off first prizes or the greater ones? You see, these speculations belong to the subject of the sublime, and they ought to have a critical decision. 2. I know that transcendentally great natures are least pure—you see, what is precise in every detail runs the risk

owned.

Addison then distinguishes—not necessarily in order of greatness—a second class of authors, who "formed themselves by rules and submitted the greatness of their natural talents to the corrections and restraints of art." Among these he includes Plato, Aristotle, Virgil, Cicero, Bacon, and Milton.

**excellences:** needless to say, the ancient rhetorical critics had a virtual "table" of excellences, and the lesser critics apparently counted these up in the way nineteenth century German editors counted manuscripts.

For Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1404b1), there is one primary excellence: lucidity (provided, of course, that the style is appropriate—neither too high nor too low—to the subject). Later he takes up other virtues of good prose (*Rhetoric* 1407a19 ff.). The first excellence is to write "good, pure Greek," and this is done by

1. accurate use of connectives and particles
2. the use of normal words, ones not large and general or vague
3. avoidance of ambiguous terms
4. accuracy in gender
5. accuracy in number

The second excellence is "swelling," a quality attainable by six means:

1. descriptions instead of technical terms (*i.e.*, periphrasis)
2. use of metaphors and epithets, provided that they are not too poetical
3. use of the plural for singular
4. repetition of the definite article with each word
5. asyndeton and polysyndeton
6. allusion by means of negation, *i.e.*, stating qualities not possessed by something

The third excellence of style is propriety, that is, a proportioning of language to theme and speaker. The language should be suitable to the topic, characteristic of the *persona*.

And the fourth excellence is rhythm: the style should be neither poetical nor unrhythmical.

These four generic excellences were, apparently, expanded and developed by Aristotle's pupil Theophrastus; by the time of the later rhetorical critics, *e.g.*, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the list is divided into two parts: the first three, which are the excellence and the remaining "epithetic" ones:

1. good pure Greek
2. lucidity
3. conciseness
4. vivid clarity
5. characterization
6. emotion
7. strength
8. persuasion
9. pleasing touches
10. greatness and wonder
11. propriety

For Aristotle many of these would be classified as species under one on his four general excellences.

Although Longinus deals with all of these, he does so as a humanist, not as a tabulator.

of pettiness, but in greatness, as in the very rich, there must actually be a kind of negligence. Perhaps it may even be necessary that though low and middle natures, because they run no risks and never commit themselves to the heights, remain for the most part without mistakes and safer, great things, liable to being unsafe, for this very reason come to greatness. 3. But, in fact, I am not ignorant of this second point, that by nature everything human is recognized more because of what is inferior in it, and that while the memory of mistakes is never effaced, the memory of fine things flows swiftly away. 4. And I myself have cited no few mistakes even

**pettiness. . .negligence:** as Russell observes, the notion is the ideal of Greek social structure. Aristotle's picture of the magnanimous man, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, or such a character as the urban and urbane father in Menander's *Dyscolus* represent the ideal in different genres. For its comic counterpart, we may compare Petronius' character of Trimalchio and F. Scott Fitzgerald's picture of Jay Gatsby. Pope remarks on the charm of Horace's "graceful negligence" (*Essay on Criticism* II.653).

**low and middle natures:** Longinus seems to be alluding, in a kind of joke, to the notion of the three styles: low, middle, great.

**great things. . .come to be greatness:** the passage seems to be a submerged allusion to Plato (*Republic* 6.497D), and behind it lies the perennial conflict of two Greek ideals: always to excel and be above others (*Iliad* 6.208) versus the ideal of the mean, the *via media*, the middle and moderate way. Longinus will seek to escape this conflict between aesthetic and moral philosophy by analyzing the nature of man: see ch. 35 and the notes there. Plato is a case in point for Longinus: Platonic ethics do not stress any Achillean ideal of excellence, and yet Plato himself, by competing with Homer, achieved great excellence and so showed the way. The parallel passage from Dionysius of Halicarnassus, cited by Russell (*Letter to Pompeius* 2) uses many of the same ideas and much the same language: Dionysius argues that Plato's mistakes are a kind of correctness.

**everything human:** the idea, of course, is a commonplace: Russell quotes Cicero (*The Orator* 1.29): "nothing is so marked or so stable in perpetual memory as that in which you do something wrong." We may append Marc Antony's observation (*Julius Caesar* III.ii):

> The evil that men do lives after them,
> The good is oft interred with their bones.

The current chapter begins with two questions, corollary but distinct, which Longinus claims are the proper province of criticism:

1. should greatness in literature, even when flawed, be considered better than what is moderate in felicities but uniformly correct?
2. should we give the prize to the larger number of felicities or to the greater ones?

For the rest of ch. 33, Longinus proceeds to answer question #1; question #2 he reserves for ch. 34. Hence, when he reaches his conclusion in the passage now under analysis, he maintains that

in Homer and many others of the greatest writers, and although I am least of all satisfied with their stumblings, calling them not voluntary mistakes but rather oversights to which the writers were carried on account of carelessness, unknowingly, as it happened, and somehow at random, and because of the greatness of their natures, nevertheless I take it that the greater elements responsible for excellence over and over again win the vote for first prize, even if they are not on the same level in all points, because of their very greatness of mind—if not for the other reason. Surely, of course, Apollonius of Rhodes, in the *Argonautica*, is also without fault, and Theocritus in his

flawed greatness is better than mere uniform perfection on a lower level of intensity, and that greatness, even though flawed, should receive the first prize simply because it comes from a "great nature"—"even if not for the other reason," *i.e.*, even if not on the principle that the greater felicities should win the first prize rather than the greater number. Throughout ch. 33, the emphasis is on nature and the natural alliance of literary greatness to natural sources. He is working his way up to the grand assertion of nature's superiority, and the sanction it gives to human nature that imitates it, in ch. 35.

**the other reason:** *i.e.*, that the greater excellences should win the first prize rather than the greater number.

**Apollonius of Rhodes. . .also:** the word "also" shows how carefully Longinus has formulated his argument: at the beginning of the chapter he had said that he was going to discuss a really faultless prose-writer; he then takes up the general proposition—whether faultless mediocrity or flawed greatness be superior—in the course of which he introduces various writers as examples. The first example listed is a poet: hence the word "also," for the principle enunciated will apply to both poetry and prose, although Longinus is, in general, more concerned with prose. For him, as for Quintilian, poetry is primarily useful as a means of educating the orator.

Apollonius of Rhodes was a poet, critic, and rhetorician. He flourished in the early second century B.C., especially at Rhodes (where Cicero later studied). Originally a pupil of Callimachus—the T. S. Eliot of antiquity—he later broke with the elaborate, ornate, allusive, and symbolic poetry of his master and tried to re-create epic. He became librarian at Alexandria, the great scholarly center of antiquity. His epic, unfinished, dealt with Jason and Medea and the voyage of the Argonauts; although Homeric in intent and style and diction, it was strongly influenced by Euripides and by later theories of rhetoric, and in turn influenced Virgil, particularly in the exploitation of emotion and passionate love. It was of his attempted epic that his old teacher Callimachus coined the famous epigram, *mega biblion, mega kakon:* a big book is a big evil. Callimachus spawned a school of poets who specialized in the cameo epic or epyllion. Russell cites Quintilian's judgment on Apollonius' poetry (20.2.54): "a work not to be despised because of a certain mediocrity."

**pastorals. . .Theocritus:** the word for "pastoral" is "bucolic," not "eclogue,"

pastorals (except for some extraneous material) comes out most luckily. Now wouldn't you rather be Homer than Apollonius? 5. And what of this? Eratosthenes in his *Erigone*—a blameless little poem in all its parts—is he indeed a greater poet than Archilochus, who sweeps many things along in disorder, with his outburst of daemonic spirit, so hard to bring under rule? And what of this? In lyric poetry would you choose to be

a word which, in Longinus, refers to the "selection of words."

Theocritus also writes poems which are not pastoral, and—in some poems—has prefatory sections which are addressed to contemporaries, *e.g.*, his medical friend in Idylls 11 and 13. Longinus, then, must be referring to those places in the pastoral poems where Theocritus drops his bucolic *personae* and speaks in his own right. It was necessary for him to specify these exceptions, for otherwise critics who were pro-Caecilius could have complained that he had not chosen faultless examples, as he claimed to be doing at the beginning of the chapter and as he repeats here.

Theocritus flourished in the third century B.C.; he is most closely associated with Sicily, where he seems to have invented the genre known as "pastoral." These bucolilc idylls are dramatic and mimetic versions of ordinary life, especially among country people, made perfect by the usual Greek habit of idealization. Of course, the subject matter itself precluded situations which would allow for sublimity: pastoral stresses characterization and the weaker emotions.

**Eratosthenes in his *Erigone*:** the poem survives only in fragments; it is aetiological in nature, that is, it seeks to explain some ancient customs by means of a versified myth laden with recondite allusions and fraught with rare, difficult, and hghly "poetical" words, à la Callimachus or some of Catullus' longer poems. The genre, which has no real counterpart in English poetry, was the favorite form for the Alexandrian poets, of whom Eratosthenes was one. Head of the library at Alexandria, Eratosthenes was a polymath: he wrote on astronomy, geography, geometry, philosophy, history, and grammar—a rich set of resources for his recondite verse. None of his work survives except in fragments. His nicknames were "Beta" and "Pentathlos" because, his enemies said, he was never "Alpha" (*i.e.*, first) in anything.

**Archilochus:** Archilochus, like all the poets whom Longinus praises in this paragraph, lived in the "great" period of Greek literature, that is the fifth century B.C. and earlier; those whom he censures are almost all Alexandrian poets. It is a tribute to Longinus' taste that the world has seen fit to agree with him unanimously, a confirmation of his "test of time." Only fragments of Archilochus (seventh century B.C.) survive; he was famous for his invectives and for his dithyrambs, poems at least in part improvised under the inspiration of Dionysus or his surrogate, wine.

**rule:** Longinus uses this word only here (except for two instances where he is referring to titles of books—Plato's *Laws* in 29.1 and the Pentateuch in 9.9). His use corresponds exactly with Demosthenes' observation—a favorite cita-

Bacchylides rather than Pindar, and in tragedy Ion of Chios rather than (heaven knows) Sophocles?—since Bacchylides and Ion are without fault and their works are everywhere smooth and finely written, while there are

tion in Hermogenes—that "rule" (*nomos* in Greek) is common and arranged (*i.e.*, orderly) and the same for all men, whereas nature is unarranged (*i.e.*, not orderly) and individual. The notion, which is traceable to Aristotle and Theophrastus, simultaneously confirms and denies Longinus' theory of nature as expressed in ch. 2—that nature is at once beyond human "rule" and yet a "rule" unto herself. The word *nomos* is best translated as "rule," a word which in English covers both man-made conventions and "unwritten laws," *e.g.*, the length of a football field and the rule that one may not change the rules in the middle of the game. Awareness of this overlapping meaning of *nomos* makes the famous line of Pindar's clear: "Nomos" is the king of all. For the history of the word "nomos," see Martin Ostwald, *Nomos and the Beginnings of Athenian Democracy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

**Bacchylides:** until the end of the nineteenth century only fragments of Bacchylides survived; then a papyrus containing many of his complete poems was discovered. He lived in the fifth century B.C. and was a nephew of Simonides, one of the greatest of Greek lyric poets. Simonides was noted for his chiselled control of emotion and grandeur; in his nephew the chiselled emotion remained but the grandeur was lost. Both poets were rivals of Pindar. Longinus praised Simonides earlier (15.7); perhaps he loads his case a little here by using Bacchylides as his example.

**Pindar:** it is impossible to convey any sense of Pindar's greatness in translation or in criticism. Although only one kind of his poems survives in any completion—his victory odes on Olympic athletes—even in this strange genre his cryptic and gnomic majesty, his dense and original imagery, his extraordinary power to invest the simplest situation or thought with transcendent significance blaze and shine vividly. Numerous English poets from Cowley on have tried to imitate or translate him; all have ended in the kind of language which Longinus censures in ch. 3. He lived in the early fifth century B.C., was a contemporary of Aeschylus, whom he strongly resembles, was aristocratic in taste and politics: Plato admired him. Pindar's Greek is extremely difficult and he violates, at one time or another, every rule for "excellence" in literary style.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus groups Pindar with Empedocles, Aeschylus, Thucydides, and Antiphone (*On Composition* 22) and summarizes the "austere" style which such writers exemplify as: diverse in figures, sparing of connectives, disdainful of transitions, of a great nature, outspoken, without prettiness, and having an archaic patina.

**Ion of Chios:** a tragedian of mid fifth century, B.C.; none of his work survives except in fragments. He also wrote prose works on the history and nature of tragedy.

**smooth:** the word is associated with the middle of the so-called three styles; Aristotle used the word to describe the hairless smoothness of spiders; by extension it came to denote what is dainty, neat,

times when Pindar and Sophocles flame up impulsively and quench themselves irrationally and collapse most unluckily. Would any man in his senses esteem all of Ion's drama, put together in the same place, as equal to one drama, the *Oedipus*?

subtle. Even when classical sculpture displays tension and agony, as in the famous statue of Laocoon, the medium itself imposes a restraint and smoothness.

As with style, so with the nature of the artist; the idea is perhaps the origin of Buffon's famous dictum, "The style is the man," although the idea can also be traced back through several other ancient sources as well, *e.g.*:

a) Plato (*Republic* 400D) says that the "turn of style. . .follows the character of the soul."
b) Demetrius (295): "every man imitates himself with pleasure."
c) Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Roman Antiquities* 1.1): "Words are the likeness of the soul."
d) Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* (3.41): of a piece of writing "arranged impressively and in accordance with the ring of the man."

The notion appears in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (The prefatory *Democritus to the Reader*): "It is most true, *stylus virum arguit*—our style betrays us."

**Sophocles:** we are not used to seeing Sophocles classified as a rough genius, full of ups and downs, although Plutarch too comments on his unevenness (*On Listening to Lectures* 45b).

**flame up:** Longinus' use of fire-imagery recalls his comparison of Demosthenes and Cicero (ch. 12) and looks forward both to the comparison of Demosthenes and Hyperides (the truly faultless prose-writer promised at the beginning of the chapter) and to the famous image of Mt. Aetna.

**the *Oedipus*:** like Aristotle, and the world in general, Longinus ranks the *Oedipus Rex* as the greatest of tragedies.

## Chapter 34

# Demosthenes and Hyperides

BUT if correctness were decided by number, not by true greatness, Hyperides would be better than Demosthenes in every point. He is, you see, able to create more voices than Demosthenes and he has more

**correctness:** Longinus now proceeds to "number" the "correctnesses" found in Hyperides; the comparison is one of the most sustained, elegant, and accurate pieces of ancient literary criticism which we possess. It is part of his preparation for establishing a set of critical principles better than those used by Caecilius. What these principles are has appeared throughout the work so far and will receive its most philosophical expression in the next chapter.

**Hyperides:** Hyperides flourished in the fourth century B.C. As an orator he was good enough to be classified in the canon of ten, named as the greatest orators by Alexandrian critics. Since Caecilius wrote a book on the ten great orators, he would have treated Hyperides; apparently he rated him below Lysias. In raising Hyperides to a competitive status with Demosthenes, Longinus is himself competing with Caecilius.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in his fragmentary work *On Imitation* (5), discusses Hyperides in terms some of which are highly similar to those of Longinus: *e.g.*, he is moderate, full of graces, and especially to be emulated for his powers of narrative. To these Dionysius adds that Hyperides surpasses Lysias in the artistic treatment of his phrasing, the last topic of Longinus' long parenthesis on figures; that he surpassed everybody in the readiness of his invention to do everything; and that, although seeming to be simple, he really had power. Longinus concedes the simplicity but denies the power.

Hermogenes (*On Ideas* II.382) compares Hyperides to Demosthenes and finds him most deficient in power, although he seems to agree with Dionysius, saying that where Hyperides has power, it both seems and is power. Hermogenes also says that the greatness of Hyperides is "over-bold."

**more voices:** Dionysius, in *On Composition* (16), uses the same word of Homer in praising him for his skill at manipulating sounds, *i.e.*, vowels and consonants, to express the emotions, dispositions, and actions of his *personae*. It thus indicates ability in characterization, a point in which Longinus readily concedes superiority to Hyperides. The concession is, of course, strategic: Hyperides will suffer from the defect of his qualities, for his extensive diversity precludes the kind of intensive power which is the mark of sublimity. This strategy is the reason for Longinus' use of the bloc-technique in his comparison of the two orators (rather than a set of balanced clauses), for the sustained and perceptive catalogue of Hyperides' felicities is a build-up preparatory to knocking him down. It is

excellences, and he is just below the top in everything, like a competitor in the pentathlon, so that he is left behind all the others struggling in the competition for first prizes, but is first among the private amateurs.

2. Hyperides, in addition to imitating all the Demosthenian correctnesses (except, of course, for the way he puts things together), is too much taken with both the excellences and graces of Lysias. You see, he talks with simplicity when it is necessary and does not say everything consistently and

clever of Longinus to make Hyperides include all of the virtues of Lysias, plus his own, and at the same time to make the qualities of Lysias Lysias' own weaknesses.

**pentathlon:** a contest consisting of five events: running, jumping, wrestling, throwing a discus, and throwing a javelin. As we know from the modern version of this—the decathlon of the Olympic Games—athletes who win all or most of these events cannot really compete with those who specialize in one.

In using this analogy, Longinus probably has in mind the kind of writer whom he put in the faultless but middle class in the previous chapter, notably Eratosthenes, whose nickname was *Pentathlos*.

**struggling:** Longinus exploits all the meanings of the word he uses here; from the Greek (*agon*) we derive "antagonist" and "protagonist." Primarily it refers to one who competes in athletic contests; in Isocrates and Thucydides, the word is specifically opposed to "critic." Since there is a double competition going on—between Demosthenes and Hyperides as contestants and between Caecilius and Longinus as critics—the joke is obvious. We have generally translated the word with some form of "struggle."

**private amateurs:** in Greek the word literally means "private citizens." Since Longinus is interested in training men for public life, the suggested contempt is withering: Demosthenes could take the "heat" of political struggle; Hyperides, Longinus may be implying, could not.

**he talks:** here begins the "bloc" of terms with which Longinus characterizes Hyperides. It falls into three parts: 1) his variety of tone and characterization; 2) his wit; 3) his skill at the emotion of lament, at myth, and at display-speeches.

In this bloc, Longinus seems simply to enumerate the "correctnesses" to be found in the work of Hyperides; as succeeding notes will show, he places and phrases these so neatly as to be simultaneously an enumeration and a judicious evaluation of virtues and vices.

**simplicity:** a technical term in rhetoric, the word is treated at length by Hermogenes, in his book *On Ideas* (Spengel II.351-7). The essence of simplicity, says Hermogenes, is purity, that is, perceptions that are common to all men and that have nothing deep or highly conceptual in them—the kind of thing that children would grasp. The word also had special reference to philosophical style as distinct from that of practical legal style; we may think of such English writers as Matthew Arnold, with

in one tone, as Demosthenes does; his characterization has a pleasing and sweet quality, made pleasing by its simplicity; his urbanities are ineffable: a

his patient and often maddening repetitions, or G. E. Moore. Hermogenes says that the method for this style is to be pleonastic (Spengel II.354).

**in one tone:** Rhys Roberts, in the Glossary to his edition of Dionysius of Halicarnassus' book *On Composition,* defines the term we have translated as "tone" by four English nouns: tone, tension, pitch, accent. Our English "tone" is so loosely used nowadays as to be almost meaningless. Still, we can speak of the prevailing "tone" of a piece of music, a speech, or even a situation.

Although Longinus knew that no one could be sublime all the time, but would have "peak" moments, he seems at first glance to be conceding to Hyperides a variety of pitch or tone and hence the unevenness which he associates with sublime writing. But analysis will show that Hyperides' variety of tone takes form in his graceful characterization and his mastery of its manners. Within his range he is more various, but his range is itself narrow.

**urbanities:** with this word Longinus commences an almost pyrotechnically brilliant, and exhaustive, catalogue of the Lysias-like "excellences and graces" of Hyperides; in damning one he damns the other, too. Each of the items listed is a technical term in rhetoric, which Longinus manipulates with his own urbane ease and raillery. No better way can be found to demonstrate the greatness of Longinus than to compare his casual definitions and deployments of these technical terms with the way they are treated in the rhetorical handbooks.

"Urbanities" derives from the old Greek word for city; it embraces all of what we call "city-manners." The term begins to become a part of the technical vocabulary of rhetoric in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (1410b7 ff.), where it denotes these *bon mots,* those well put points, which men have a good opinion of. To think these up is the mark and the job of a man who is clever-natured and trained. For such clever talk in English, see Lyly's novel *Euphues* and the long tradition of English wits like Sidney Smith and Oscar Wilde. Aristotle lists three basic devices for achieving this effect: metaphor, antithesis, and a sense of sprightly vividness.

In the later rhetorical handbooks, the term is classified as a figure and as a trope; it is generally one species of the genus irony; but the distinctions are not always clear or consistent. In Cocondrius' book *On Tropes* (Spengel III.235-36) we find the most subtle treatment of it. Irony, says Cocondrius, is a speech which makes something clear by saying the opposite with a characteristic delivery: it is sometimes directed at ourselves, sometimes at others. He lists two kinds of self-irony: urbanity and *antimetathesis*: in the first we cast aspersions on another by a speech in which we allude to our relationship with him, as Telemachus does in the *Odyssey* (17.397): "Antinous, what a fine fatherly concern you show for me!"; in the second we deprecate ourselves, suggesting a pretence of self-censure at the same time that we pretend to praise another.

**ineffable:** perhaps such graces are "nameless" and "inexpressible"—but Longinus names and expresses them.

most politic sneer, good breeding, well trained irony, jokes neither

In view of the detailed list that follows, the use of "ineffable" is probably a joke.

**sneer:** Cocondrius (Spengel III.235-6) defines *sneer* as a speech said with a smile with an additional contraction of the nostrils. The anonymous work *On Tropes* (Spengel III.213) gives more anatomical details in its illustrative example: when someone has been caught in the act of doing something bad we sneer if we say "What a fine thing you did, so characteristic of a prudent man," blowing a breath out through the nostrils. It was, apparently, a sophisticated snort.

**good breeding:** a certain assumption of aristocratic inheritance underlies the term. By including it in the list of Hyperides' urbanities, Longinus softens any implication that the orator was malicious. To Cardinal Newman's famous definition of a gentleman as one who never hurt anybody else Oscar Wilde added "unintentionally."

**well-trained:** the Greek word suggests experience in the kind of training given in a gymnasium or wrestling school. Both the word translated *well-trained* and "gymnasium" came to be regular words for schools of the mind as well as the body. So too in Germany high school is called *gymnasium*. Aristotle had said (see above n. on **urbanities**) that urbanity was the result of good nature and training. The conventional metaphors enable Longinus to sustain his simultaneous athletic and critical parallels.

**irony:** the only use of this term in Longinus. It is peculiar that, although the Greeks practised irony more than any other culture, both in tragedy and in philosophy, and that the phrase "Socratic irony" is a commonplace in English, theorizing on irony is very late and not very impressive. The rhetorical handbooks define it badly and classify species, but its treatment is meager. We find nowhere in the handbooks, except for a few hints in Cocondrius (see above n. on **urbanities**), our distinction between irony and dramatic irony. For us, both sarcasm and irony fit under the genus of saying the opposite of what is meant with an intention of being understood by somebody: in sarcasm, we wish the person addressed to understand the truth; in irony, we wish some third person—either an observer or ourselves—to appreciate the truth. And dramatic irony consists of words expressing a truth opposite to that stated which are understood not by the speaker but by someone else, either a character in the play or the audience or both.

The Greek writers on irony, of course, understood the principle that the genus consisted of saying the opposite of what was meant (Spengel I.208, III.22, 53, 60, 91, etc.); but its species for them became a matter of facial gestures accompanying the irony, *e.g.*, the smile, the smile with teeth showing, the sniff or sneer, etc.

Hermogenes did not treat the subject—a most curious omission by the subtlest and most copious of the ancient writers on rhetorical theory. The anonymous work *On Figures* (Spengel III.141) shows a knowledge that irony can be achieved by overstatement or understatement. Zonaeus, in his book *On Figures* (Spengel III.164), suggests that Greeks knew of the connection between

unrefined nor ill-bred as in the Attic orators but placed fittingly, a dexterity at ridicule, much comic skill, and a spur well aimed with playfulness—and in all of these an inimitable charm; his nature is most able to evoke a sense of the lamentable, and he is utterly flexible at pouring out myth-making and with his fluid spirit at finding his way through digressions, as in his rather

the pathetic and the ironic, but his observation is brief and does not reveal much. The rhetoricians also knew that it was closely connected with delivery (*e.g.*, the anonymous *On Tropes* in Spengel III.213), but again there is only a brief treatment. Of course, irony may have been discussed at length in some lost work, or the Greeks may simply have understood its workings so well that they did not bother to analyze it, just as Plato and Aristotle never define imitation.

**unrefined:** literally, "lacking in music or the muse." In 28.1, Longinus uses the word—the only other time in the extant text. There, in discussing periphrasis, he had drawn an analogy between ornamentation, or "pralltrillers," in music and periphrasis in writing; both are effective if there is nothing overblown or "unrefined." Here, in ch. 34, he emphasizes again that Hyperides controls his ironic and sarcastic wit with gentlemanly discretion, a point he will stress again in the next phrase, "nor ill-bred."

**Attic orators:** a vexed passage; Russell summarizes the dispute and interpretations. Prickard translates it correctly: "as in those great Attic Orators."

**inimitable charm:** given Longinus' high opinion of imitation, we may assume that "inimitable" is not wholly complimentary.

**the lamentable:** once again Longinus stresses the weakness of Hyperides, for this is the word which Longinus had used as an example of the "low" emotions in 8.2. To translate it "pity," as do Roberts, Einarson, Grube, Fyfe, Russell, and Dorsch, or "compassion," as does Prickard, is misleading. Longinus is engaged in his own "hatchet-job" on Hyperides.

**myth-telling:** Dionysius of Halicarnassus had praised Hyperides as being supreme at *narrative*, a word which Longinus uses of Homer's love for mythic tales in the *Odyssey* (9.13). With arch malice, Longinus makes the same point, but by using the word for "myth" rather than the word for "narrative," he again undercuts Hyperides' claim to greatness. Hermogenes, in his book *On Ideas* (Spengel II.287-88), praises Hyperides for his treatment of myth, but the praise is partly damning: there is not much of this kind of thing done in a poetic manner by public speakers, says Hermogenes, although there is in Hyperides. In the *Progymnasmata* of Nicholas the Sophist (Spengel III.451), an elementary set of rhetorical exercises for beginning rhetoricians, myth is placed as the first exercise because, Nicholas says, it is "simple" by nature and like poetry in its appeal to the young. One kind he classifies as "mythic narrative."

**fluid:** the word is not complimentary, for it implies a facile, dainty, languishing, and even feeble nature.

too poetic passage on Leto, and (and I don't know whether any other writer did so) he did make his Funeral Oration an epideictic speech. 3. Demosthenes, on the other hand, is not given to characterization; he does not pour himself forth; he is least fluid and epideictic, and of the qualities just listed he more often than not has no share. And surely when he forces himself to generate laughter and urbanities, he does not so much excite laughter as make himself laughable; and when he wishes to approach being graceful, he is all the farther from it. And, of course, had he tried his hand at writing on Phryne or the little speech on Athenogenes, he would surely have established still more the reputation of Hyperides as the superior of the two. 4. But indeed I take it that the fine things of Hyperides, even if they are numerous, are all the same lacking in greatness and achieve no effect because they come from "the heart of one sober" and allow the audience to

**passage on Leto:** from a lost speech entitled *Deliacus;* it is the speech cited by Hermogenes when he praises Hyperides' use of myth.

**Funeral Oration:** the speech survives; it was first published, in modern times, in 1858. Longinus expresses an almost grudging surprise that Hyperides has somehow converted the genre of the funeral oration into an epideitic speech, a kind of speech which he did not rate highly. The later rhetoricians, however, (*e.g.*, Menander in Spengel III.418) do classify the funeral oration as a species of the epideictic speech. Presumably Longinus had in mind the deliberative and advisory nature of such funeral orations as that of Pericles.

**characterization:** Russell cites Marcellinus (*Thucydides* 57) on the lack of characterization in the speeches of Thucydides. Since characterization was closely connected with comedy, it necessarily lacked austerity, grandeur, sublimity.

**Phryne:** the famous speech, now lost, by Hyperides defended the celebrated *hetaira* (courtesan) Phryne, whom Hyperides brought into court so that her beauty might supplement the beauty of his pleading. Athenaeus (13.590e) says that Hyperides hoped Phryne's beauty would enhance the appeals to lamentation usually contained in a peroration. Longinus says that Hyperides was a specialist in exploiting the lamentable (34.2).

**little speech of Athenogenes:** the speech survives in extensive fragments; it is marked by much characterization. The word for "little speech" is, like most of the diminutives in Longinus, pejorative.

**"the heart of one sober":** the metrical quality of the phrase suggests that it is a quotation; Russell cites a similar proverbial expression from Plutarch (*De Garrulitate* 503 f.). Longinus seems to be alluding also to the critics of Plato who censured his imagery as seeming like that of a poet who was himself not sober (32.7). Wine as a kind of inspiration is a well-known phenomenon: Longinus disliked Dionysiac frenzy in authors but admired Apollonian transport: Hyperides has neither the virtue

remain still—no one is frightened when reading Hyperides—but Demosthenes takes up the tale, drawing on excellences which start from what is great in nature and end up on the height: a tone of sublime address, emotions with a soul, resources, quickness of conception, swiftness, and, where important, a power and capacity unreachable by all others. And since, I say, he has concentrated all these into himself, like heaven-sent gifts (one cannot rightly say they are human), by means of his fine qualities he is victorious over all others and, as compensation for those he does not have, he outthunders, as it were, and outshines public speakers of all ages: one might actually be more capable of opening his eyes towards a thunderbolt bearing in on him than to set his eyes on the emotions of this man as they come one on top of another.

nor the vice of inspiration, for he is only correct.

**to remain still:** in 20.2, Longinus had praised Demosthenes for his ability to avoid monotony and to excite emotion: stillness, he said, comes with what is stationary, emotion with disorder. Because Hyperides is always in control, he does not himself feel emotion and hence cannot communicate or express excitement to his audience. That passage and this are the only two places in which Longinus uses the verb "to be still."

We may compare Johnson's remarks on Addison (*Lives of the Poets*):

> His prose is the model of the middle style; on grave subjects not formal, on light occasions not groveling; pure without scrupulosity, and exact without apparent elaboration; always equable, and always easy, without glowing words or pointed sentences. Addison never deviates from his track to snatch a grace; he seeks no ambitious ornaments, and tries no hazardous innovations. His page is always luminous, but never blazes in unexpected splendour.

The *Spectator* papers are among the best examples in English of characterization.

**takes up the tale:** A glancing quotation from the *Odyssey* (8.499), where Demodocus begins his song of the Trojan war from a particular point. Russell observes that the quoted phrase had a kind of vogue in late Greek as a way of saying "thereupon." Since Demodocus begins at a high point of the tale, the allusion is well placed and not merely voguish, for Demosthenes starts from a nature well endowed with excellences and works his way up from there to sublimity.

**power and capacity:** in 8.1, Longinus had prefaced his fivefold division of the parts of sublimity by conceding, as a foundation for all of them, "capacity for speaking"; here in ch. 34 he conjoins that fundamental quality with the outstanding characteristic of Demosthenes: power. No other ancient writer on rhetoric makes power the central criterion for greatness and sublimity: it is to Longinus what "pleasing" was to Johnson, who said of Pope's version of the *Iliad:*

> To a thousand cavils one answer

is sufficient; the purpose of a writer is to be read, and the criticism which would destroy the power of pleasing must be blown aside.

Demosthenes is the choice both of Longinus and of Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Composition* 18) precisely because he has this mastering power. He is cited more times by the various rhetorical writers in Spengel's *Rhetores Graeci* than any other author, even Homer.

## Chapter 35

# Sublimity and Human Nature

BUT in the case of Plato there is, as I was saying, another difference; you see, not only in the greatness of his excellences, but also in their number does he fall short; and he has, besides, more in the way of mistakes than he has deficiency in excellences. 2. Now what did those authors, equals of the gods, understand as they desired what is greatest in writing

Longinus now resumes arguing the respective merits of Plato and Lysias, which he had interrupted at the end of ch. 32 in order to compare Hyperides and Demosthenes. The purpose of the parenthetical comparison was twofold: (1) to show that Caecilius did not even know how to conduct a comparison in the conventional rhetorical terms which he thought were his premises; and (2) to clear the ground for establishing the true principles and premises of literary criticism, especially criticism of the sublime.

In comparing Hyperides and Demosthenes, Longinus had used conventional rhetorical premises: the excellences and correctnesses; he had, however, made the fundamental distinction between a) enumerating these—as if aesthetic judgments could be quantified—and b) judging them by the standard of truth. Now, as he again takes up his comparison of Plato and Lysias, he introduces an important qualification of these two principles: in dealing with Hyperides and Demosthenes, he had confined himself to the number of excellences and to correctness; in dealing with Plato and Lysias, however, he uses the new criterion which he has been suggesting throughout chs. 32-34: not the number of virtues but their intensity; not the mere absence of vices but their presence as the necessary cost of intense greatness. Hyperides, Longinus admits, is superior to Demosthenes if one uses only the number of excellences; but Plato is easily equal in the number of excellences. Where Plato falls behind Lysias is in the number and excessiveness of his faults and mistakes. In fact, Longinus concedes, Plato's vices constitute a greater basis for censure than any deficiency in excellences. It will be Longinus' purpose, in ch. 35, to show that the vices of Plato are the necessary concomitant of his greatness, and that Plato's greatness could not have been achieved without the vices. He almost takes it for granted that Plato's greatnesses are superior—when they do occur—to anything in Lysias. The mixture of virtue and vice in Plato is like that found in the universe itself.

Russell observes that "The themes of this passage are *for the most part* [italics ours] philosophical commonplaces, some Stoic in origin, some Platonic or even Pythagorean. L is a typical, though unoriginal, witness to a type of piety and moral reflection which formed the common spiritual fare of the educated in the first two centuries or so of the

and felt themselves to be above precision in all details? It was, in addition to many other things, this: that nature did not decide that man would be a low or ignoble animal; but leading us into life and into the whole cosmos as if

Empire." Russell goes on to distinguish four themes, which he discusses with parallels drawn from other authors:

1. "The nobility of man"
2. "Man is in the cosmos as a spectator and contestant in a marvellous panegyric"
3. "The human mind is capable of passing in thought everywhere, even beyond the bounds of the cosmos"
4. "For what purpose were we born?"

If "borrowing" or "plagiarism" is a form of imitation, what shall we say of dealing with those ideas which have been treated by one's whole culture? The "history of ideas" is an essential branch of history, but we do not find it useful ourselves to classify a major statement in a late stage of such history as a "commonplace." For Longinus, as for Johnson, such dismissal would have been a compliment: "great ideas are always general," Johnson said, borrowing from Longinus even as he stamped the commonplace with the cast of his own genius. Perhaps the most minimal definition of wit is that of Pope: "What oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed" (*Essay on Criticism* II.298); as Johnson says, in the life of Cowley, it reduces wit "from strength of thought to happiness of language." But even if Longinus could claim no higher wit than this, he would command our attention, for the sources and analogues cited by Russell in his notes are far too often lost to us, and we are in no position to make any kind of distinction, invidious or otherwise, about either the "strength of thought" or the "happiness of language." Russell's admission that these are "philosophical" commonplaces is of the utmost importance, for Longinus is not simply talking about philosophy but—in what is, as far as we can tell, an original way—about the relevance of such observations to literary criticism. As this chapter is the heart of his theory of sublimity, and of his difference with Caecilius, we must be prepared to see in the ideas, commonplaces though they may be philosophically, a power of expression and conviction that merit the exaltation of feeling which all readers experience on reading them.

**low:** Russell suggests that Longinus may have in mind the ancient teleology of man's upright stature: he cites Cicero (*On the Nature of the Gods* 2.140): god "who first stood them aloft and upright so that, gazing on the sky, they might grasp an understanding of the gods." To this we may add Ovid's famous picture at the beginning of the *Metamorphoses* (1.85 ff), where the phrase *sublime os* is used. Segal (p. 145, n. 33) cites contemporary sources which collect passages expressing the idea.

**life:** the Greek word, *bios*, from which we derive "biology" and "biography," originally had the sense of organic existence; after Plato the word almost always suggests quality or way of life. This sense of development seems to be in Longinus' mind as he first says that man was not *intended* to be a low or ignoble living creature (*i.e.*, his potential existence) and then says that nature led him into "life (*bios*)" in order to lead a certain kind of life, one with quality.

into a kind of world's fair to be, in a way, its observers and to be lovers of the

He describes this quality in his word for "world's fair" (see below).

**world's fair:** *panegyric*, the Greek word, came to mean "celebrating a public festival" and then the public festival itself; later it referred to a speech delivered in such an assembly, especially a speech of praise. The most famous of the ancient *panegyrics* is that of Isocrates. In the rhetorical handbooks, a panegyric was a kind of epideictic or "display" speech, which could be of either praise or censure (Nicholas the Sophist, *Progymnasmata* [Spengel III.450]); Hermogenes, in his book *On Ideas* (Spengel II.403), associates it especially with Plato. Such speeches dealt with the state and its culture as a whole. Isocrates, for example, praises Athens because, unlike other Greek states, it did not hold "world's fairs" from time to time but was instead a perpetual and year-long "world's fair" (*Panegyricus* 46).

There is a good account of what such a "world's fair" was like in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* (8.18): it has

> sacred groves and shrines and race-courses and a theatre and races of men from neighboring countries and from foreign lands and from overseas; many arts go to make it up, and many skills and much true wisdom of poets and advisers and philosophers and athletic contests and musical contests. . .it collects and domiciles the most important of what is important and the most praised of what is praised.

Just as the small city-state (the *polis*) became, in the Hellenistic period, the "cosmopolis," or "city of the world," so Longinus expands the metaphor to make the cosmos itself a "world's fair," to which all men are sent by nature as "spectators" and "observers."

**observers:** Men in general are sent by nature, says Longinus, into the world as spectators in a theatre or at the Olympic games. Thus far he seems to agree with the Pythagorean, Platonic, and Aristotelian theory, that the contemplative (*i.e.*, theoretical) life was superior to the active (*i.e.*, practical) life. So Pythagoras, in a famous analogy to which Longinus is alluding, says that men come to life as they do to the Olympic games, for three purposes: to sell merchandise to others and make a profit; to compete for glory in physical contests; to see fine sights (Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras* 58). This third group, Pythagoras said, was "of course the freest." Such detachment, such a sense of superiority to the sweat and struggle of life, marks the Pythagorean part of Plato and of Aristotle, when they praise the spectators over the other groups. In the perversion of the notion which occurred during the Hellenistic period, we find the philosophy of Epicureanism, just as we find a parallel perversion of the Socratic Plato's concern for civic life in Hellenistic Stoicism. Cynicism tried, paradoxically, to combine the two.

Longinus here takes his place with the Socratic Plato and against the Pythagorean Plato: he sees the need for the contemplative life, but only as a means to participation in the life of this world—like the philosopher in the Socratic allegory of the cave (*Republic* 7.514 ff). For Longinus, as for Cicero, gazing on the heavens and the cosmos was a way of enabling the politician and states-

esteem which comes to those who compete, immediately she implants into our souls an erotic passion which cannot be fought for all that is great and more daemonic than we. 3. For just this reason not even the entire cosmos taken together can cope with the thrust of human theorizing and perceptiveness, but man's intentness on perceiving often everywhere goes out beyond the limits of what holds him in, and if anyone gaze around at life in its cycle, he will swiftly understand for what purpose we were born, by

man to understand the hierarchy of things and his dual obligation to it—to study the divine order above as a means of enabling him to govern the human order below both idealistically and compassionately (Cicero, *On Old Age* 77).

Even Isocrates, who did not himself deliver speeches and share in the hurly-burly of political life, recognized that one must descend into the arena and compete (*Helen* 9 ff), and if Isocrates did not himself participate vocally, he trained his students to do so.

**lovers of the esteem:** the love of ambition may, of course, work for either good or ill.

Longinus intended his book as an aid to men entering active political life; he is, then, a latter-day Isocrates, with more taste and wit but not different in aim. Nature implants a dual desire in us: to see the greatness in and of the world and then to imitate and rival it. The greater the thing we observe, the greater our desire to master it, up to and beyond the cosmos itself.

**erotic passion:** in 15.3, Longinus uses the word quite literally to signify one of Euripides' thematic specialities. His only other uses of the noun are metaphorical: in 4.1, Caecilius is said to have an "erotic passion"—a positive mania, as it were—for exciting strange conceptions. Such an "erotic passion" grows from the same source as man's natural "erotic passion" for greatness mentioned here in ch. 35. Galen (*On the Natural Faculties* 3.10) shows that the metaphor was still alive in the second century A.D.: the young student, he says, should have a kind of "erotic passion" for the truth, "just as if he were inspired."

**thrust:** one may think of Matthew Arnold's notion of religion as language "thrown at" what he called "the power not ourselves" (*God and the Bible, passim*).

> Russell aptly cites Lucretius (1.72 ff.): Therefore the living force of the soul had conquered and gone out beyond the far-flaming walls of the universe and has travelled, in mind and soul, its whole immensity.

Another parallel, found in Aristotle's (or pseudo-Aristotle's) book *On the Cosmos* (1) is especially apposite, for here the author contrasts the philosophic attempt to transcend the cosmos with the physical attempt of the Aloadae, whom Longinus discussed in 8.2; similarly, in 9.5, Longinus quotes the Homeric passage on the magnificent leaping of Poseidon's horses, which would, in two leaps, have measured out the cosmos.

**cycle:** the emphasis on circularity is not uncommon. We may compare Shakespeare's sonnet 21: "that heaven's air in this huge rondure hems." Shakespeare

seeing how much what is "too much" and great and fine holds more advantage in all things. 4. Therefore we are (heaven knows) somehow driven by nature to wonder not at small streams, even if they are clear and useful, but at the Nile and the Danube and the Rhine, and still more at the

here seeks to transcend all the elements of the universe, and to reach truth itself. Longinus is probably exploiting many of the applications of the Greek word (*kyklos*): a dance, the sky, the sun, other heavenly bodies, the eyes, the cyclic epic poems, the cyclic theory of the universe, and the rhetorical meaning of a periodic sentence, of which his own sentence is a splendid example.

**too much:** probably a deliberate echo of the verb "he has more" (literally, "he has too much") used just above (35.1); Plato, Longinus conceded, often had "too much" in the way of faults—and yet only because he sought to be excessive did he succeed in being sublime. Not all excess is bad, as Longinus shows by adding the words "great and fine" to its use here.

**what holds him in. . .holds more:** it is impossible to duplicate in English the sequence of puns and word-plays which Longinus makes here. Man gazes at the rondure of the cosmos, imitates and emulates its cosmic greatness, and seeks to transcend it by holding in that which holds him in, by containing more than his container.

**the Nile. . .the Rhine:** a famous passage, much admired in the eighteenth century. The illustration may be a glancing censure of Callimachus and his doctrine of the small elaborated poem: in the *Hymn of Apollo* (108 ff.), Callimachus said that big poems were like big rivers—turgid.

Hume conflates both passages in his essay *"Of the Middle Station in Life,"* where he imagines a dialogue between two rivulets, one of which has suddenly grown much larger and speaks of rivaling the "Danube or the Rhine." To this "the humble rivulet" replies:

> You are indeed swoln to a great size; but methinks you are become withal somewhat turbulent and muddy. I am contented with my low condition and purity.

Russell quotes some lines from Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination* (i), a poem which in turn derives from Addison and Longinus; Addison discusses the topic in several of the *Spectator* papers, especially #412:

> Our imagination loves to be filled with an object, or to grasp at anything that is too big for its capacity. We are flung into a pleasing astonishment at such unbounded views, and feel a delightful stillness and amazement in the soul at the apprehension of them. The mind of man naturally hates everything that looks like a restraint upon it. . . .

Akenside is even closer:

> Who but rather turns
> To heaven's broad fire his unconstrained view,
> Than to the glittering of a waxen flame?
> Who from the Alpine heights his laboring eye
> Shoots round the wide horizon, to survey
> Nilus or Ganges rolling his bright wave
> Through mountains, plains,

Ocean; nor, of course, are we more astounded by that little flame which we kindle, when it preserves a pure gleam, than by the gleam of the heavenly bodies, though they are often gloomed over, nor do we generally consider it more worthy of wonder than the craters of Aetna, whose eruptions carry up rocks and whole mounds from its abyss and sometimes pour forth rivers of

> through empires black with shade
> And continents of sand, will turn his gaze
> to mark the windings of a scanty rill
> That murmurs at his feet?

The allusion to the Alps probably owes something to Pope (*Essay on Criticism* II.223-32), although in Pope the Alps become partly a symbol of discouragement at the immensity of the cosmos. Hamlet's soliloquy is similar in sentiment (IV.iv):

> Sure, He that made us with such large discourse,
> Looking before and after, gave us not
> That capability and godlike reason
> To fust in us unused.

In Marlowe's *Faustus,* the transcendent aim becomes demonic rather than daemonic, as it does in many writings of the Romantic poets. Emerson echoes the sentiment powerfully in his essay *Circles:*

> The life of man is a self-evolving circle, which, from a ring imperceptibly small, rushes on all sides outwards to new and larger circles, and that without end. . .if the soul is quick and strong it bursts over that boundary on all sides and expands another orbit on the great deep, which also runs up into a high wave, with attempt again to stop and bind. But the heart refuses to be imprisoned; in its first and narrowest pulses it already tends outward with a vast force and to immense and innumerable expansions.

The notion degenerates, in the twentieth century, into such bombast as the close of Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* (quoted in ch. 3); the shift from a circular to a linear conception of the cosmos is influential in the degeneration, as is the movement from the idea of a "cosmos" or "universe" to what J. Robert Oppenheimer called a "pluralistic multiverse." In such a world, Pascal's cry seems more relevant: "The silence of these infinite spaces frightens me."

**the Ocean:** the word in Greek would have something of the same effect as "Nile" and "Rhine," for ocean was a god and a proper name; hence the capitalization.

**Aetna:** Longinus, we may legitimately presume, has in mind Pindar's famous description of Mt. Aetna (*Pythian* 1.21 ff), for Aetna was not violently active in the first century A.D. Pliny the Elder (*Natural History* 2.110.236) says only that it "always glows at night." Had Longinus written after the famous eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D., we might perhaps have expected him to mention it here, as he uses more than one river to make his point. For the possible effect of this argument on dating Longinus, see *Dating.*

Longinus is using the allusion to

that single earthbred fire. 5. But in all such things we may say this, that though what is useful or even necessary has for humanity an easy passage, still, what is contrary to opinion is over and over again wonderful.

return to his defence of Plato: the great and sublime artist is like a volcanic eruption: a mass of rocks and debris and pure unapproachable fonts of fire.

**wonderful:** Longinus is aware of his own exaltation: his closing sentence is conversational in tone, a gentle apology for his flight of fancy into what Sir Thomas Browne calls *O altitudo*. The observation is founded in human nature, *e.g.*, Tacitus' *omne ignotum pro magnifico* (everything unknown is taken for something great) or Demetrius' more pallid expression (60): "Everything that is familiar is petty, and for this reason is lacking in wonder." Longinus makes two additional points by his different wording: the sense of wonder will keep on occurring provided that it is "contrary to opinion." Phenomena like the ocean never can become familiar, for they are like the cosmos—too big to be grasped except in sublime moments.

We may contrast Whitman's attempt to invest the familiar with a sense of wonder (*Song of Myself* 31):

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than
the journey-work of the stars. . .
And the narrowest hinge in my hand
puts to scorn all machinery,
And the cow crunching with de-
press'd head surpasses any statue,
And a mouse is miracle enough to
stagger sextillions of infidels.

## Chapter 36

# Excellence with Faults is Superior

NOW, then, in the case of those who are by nature great at speeches and writings—in which greatness is never apart from use and benefit—it is fitting for us to put our theory together here: 1) that though such men (those great by nature) are far from being free of mistakes, still all of them are above what is mortal; and 2) that though other things prove their users to be human beings, sublimity lifts these men almost to the greatness of mind of divinities; and 3) that though what is without a slip is not censured, what is great is actually wondered at. 2. What must one say in addition?—that each of these men often redeems his trespasses by one sublimity and correctness, and—most important—that if you selected the failings of Homer, Demosthenes, Plato, and as many of the others who are indeed greatest, and concentrated them all together in the same place, they would be found to be the least part—rather, not even an infinitesimal part—of the

Unlike Mt. Aetna, men of genius are both sublime and useful. Longinus, for all his rhapsodic appreciation of sublimity, never sinks to the doctrine of "art for art's sake."

The opening sentence, which picks up and echoes the closing sentence of the preceding chapter, is long and periodic, as are the first five of the six sentences which constitute the chapter. The chapter as a whole not only summarizes Longinus' own principles but also marks the beginning of the end of the speech.

**mind of divinities:** in the preceding chapter, Longinus had constantly referred to nature; here he introduces the word "divinity." The alternatives are like those of Ovid, in his account of the world's creation (*Metamorphoses* I.21): "God or a better nature." As a Platonist, Longinus would not subscribe to the pantheism of the Stoics.

**Homer, Demosthenes, Plato. . .:** Longinus has predecessors who held his view, for Dionysius of Halicarnassus tells that his friend Pompeius defended Plato from strictures made by Dionysius (*Letter to Pompeius* 2):

> In the other forms of expression there may well occur something which deserves mingled praise and blame. But in embellishment whatever is not success is utter failure. . .Although I could defend all, or at any rate most, of these passages [from Plato], I do not venture to gainsay you. But this one thing I strongly affirm, that it is not possible to succeed greatly in any way without such daring and recklessness as must needs fail now and then.
>
> (tr. Rhys Roberts)

things done correctly everywhere by those heroes. Because of this all the ages and all of human life, which is not seized by the mindlessness of grudging envy, brings and awards the victory prize to them, and even now protects it from being removed, and is likely to keep them thus

> while water onward flows and while great trees are
> a-blooming.

3. Though of course in reply to the one who wrote that the Colossus, with

Except for Longinus, however, full statements of this argument have all been lost.

**mindlessness of grudging envy:** the phrase "grudging envy" is one word in Greek; it covers the range of English jealousy, envy, and grudging. Einarson suggests that the notion here refers to Attic law, "whereby the heirs to an estate might charge the possessor of it with lunacy and thus preserve it from incompetent management." Sophocles, according to tradition, was brought to court by his son under such a law; the old poet, in his eighties, pleaded his own case, which consisted of reciting passages from the last play of his life, the *Oedipus at Colonus*. The judge is said to have thrown the case out of court.

**while water. . .a-blooming:** an anonymous epitaph on Midas, attributed to, but certainly not by, Homer; it is quoted by Plato (*Phaedrus* 264D) as an example of bad art, because the lines can be interchanged in any order and the poem will still make sense. Ben Johnson argued the same point of view—that a good poem ought to develop its argument. Grube translates the whole verse in his note:

> I am a bronzen maiden, on Midas'
> grave I lie,
> Till stop the flowing waters, and
> tall trees cease to grow,
> Forever here remaining, on this
> lamented tomb,
> To those who pass by saying:
> "Midas is buried here."

Russell quotes the Greek text, which appears in the *Anthologia Palatina* (7.153). Because the lines can be read in any order, Russell hints that it might have been intended to run around the sides of a tomb.

Perhaps, because of the cyclical form of the verses, Longinus means them to suggest the cycle or cycles of time; if, however, he intends his line to stand by itself, without a context, then his point will be that Homer, Plato, and the rest of the great authors will last as long as nature herself. We may recall the review of a would-be poet: "Mr. X's poems will be read when Homer and Virgil are forgotten—but not until then."

**the one who wrote:** Longinus generally refers to unspecified critics in the plural (*e.g.*, the several references in ch. 32); perhaps, then, this singular points to Caecilius.

**the Colossus:** most probably a colossal statue of Nero. If, as Pliny the Elder suggests (*Natural History* 34.46), some diminution in the art of constructing colossi had occurred, then the flawed

its mistakes, is not better than the "Spear-bearer" by Polycleitus, it may be said (in addition to many other things) that though what is wondered at in technique is the greatest precision, in the workings of nature it is greatness, and by nature the human being is characterized by rational thought; and while in statues likeness to a human being is sought, in speeches and writings, as I said, what transcends the human is sought. 4. Still (this advice, you see, turns us back to the beginning of our collection of notes)

artistry of Nero's colossus would make this allusion even more appropriate. On the relevance of the reference to the Colossus to the dating of Longinus, see our monograph *Dating*, pp. 2 and 39.

**Polycleitus:** Polycleitus flourished in the fifth century B.C. He was a theorist as well as an artist, for he wrote a book called *Canon—i.e.*, a rule or standard—in which he discussed the proportions of the human figure and "explicated" his statue the *Spear-bearer.* Galen, in his "epode" to *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body* (I.352), says that Polycleitus is justly praised for the "analogy" (*i.e.*, proportions) of his "canonical" statue, but if men knew of the inner proportions as well as the outer, they would praise nature more.

Many copies of Polycleitus' statue survive; reproductions can be found in art-handbooks and anthologies and histories, *e.g.*, G. Richter's *The Sculpture and Sculptors of Greece* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970, 245-47).

**statues. . .human being:** in discussing the analogy of sculpture and literature, Longinus is disposing of one more false premise (made by Caecilius?), for the two arts are not, in Longinus' eyes, analogous at all. Greek sculpture tended to be very representational even if it idealized what it imitated: there was nothing like our "abstract art," for example. Of course, Greek artists and sculptors tried to catch the *ethos*—what we call the "spirit"—of their subject (see Plato, *Sophist* 265B-267B). But because it was tied to the human dimension, it could not be so great as "speeches and writings," which are man's natural way of grasping nature and her greatness. So, too, in ch. 39 Longinus argues that speeches and writings are superior to music.

**as I said:** in ch. 35, which in turn was the outgrowth of the great parenthesis on figures, which was in turn a part of the fivefold division of the elements that constitute sublimity, which was in turn the formal statement that followed from the introduction. As Longinus will say in the next sentence, he is ready to start back to the beginning of his thesis. The starting point toward which Longinus is now bending back came in ch. 2, where he had raised the problem of whether sublimity comes by art or nature. Despite the long variety of his proofs, he has never forgotten his main point, which underlies every step in his argument.

**turns us back:** the root term gives the technical word for that part of a racecourse where the runners turn to start back for the starting-point. The racing metaphor contributes to the athletic imagery sustained over the past few chapters.

though correctness without any slip is more a matter of technique, preeminence (even though uneven) is a matter of natural greatness, so that technique must everywhere provide support for nature: you see, perfection might come from their mutual support.

**collection of notes:** Longinus uses this word only three times: here; in 1.2, where he says that Terentianus has urged him to get his notes together; and in 44.12, the last sentence of the extant text, where he refers to a similar collection of notes dealing with the emotions—now, alas, lost. His studied use of the self-deprecatory word is part and parcel of his academic wit.

**pre-eminence (even though uneven):** the little clause ("even though uneven") is one more turn of the screw in Longinus' *hyperbaton*, although it is, of course, a necessary qualification in what he regards as his comprehensive statement of his theory.

"Pre-eminence" is used here for the first time as a synonym for "sublimity." The word is used of the peaks of mountains, of the rising of stars, of hyperbolic excess, and of periphrasis in oratory. It is particularly appropriate here because of its astronomical and political senses, and especially the latter, for the ups and downs of political power are notorious. The little clause ("even though uneven") may have been put in where it is as a joke, to assure the Roman Terentianus that Longinus is talking about rhetoric—although, as both the first and last chapters of the work show, he has bigger game in mind.

**perfection:** implicit here is the ancient notion that perfection was attainable. Longinus thinks—or dreams—of a day when technique and nature would be so complementary as to enable men to fulfill nature's gift of potential sublimity by means of a technique which was itself sublime in comparison to the kind of pronouncements laid down by the rhetorical handbooks. What such an enlightened and illuminating doctrine of rhetoric might be Longinus has presented in his "specimen" chapters 9-43. The better ancient rhetorical critics—like Dionysius of Halicarnassus—grasped this need clearly. Dionysius makes two similar statements on the value of technique; at the end of ch. 25 (*On Composition*), comparing great artists to athletes, he says that those who have learned to read well must suppose a superior training in those who have learned to write well, and he adds:

> And it is not unnatural that those who are ignorant of this or unversed in any profession whatsoever should be surprised when they hear that anything is executed with such mastery by another as the result of artistic training. This may suffice as a rejoinder to those who are accustomed to scoff at the rules of the rhetorical manuals.
>
> (tr. Rhys Roberts)

And at the very end of the book, he remarks:

> No rules contained in rhetorical manuals can suffice to make experts of those who are determined to dispense with study and practice. They who are ready to undergo toil and hardship can alone decide whether such rules are trivial and useless, or worthy of serious consideration.
>
> (tr. Rhys Roberts)

So many things were necessary to decide critically on these speculations. But let each delight in what pleases him.

The phrase for "serious consideration" is literally "worthy of *logos*."

Thoreau's words (*Walden*, ch. 3), applied only to reading, make a demand on the reader as great as Dionysius makes on the would be author:

> It [reading] requires a training such as the athletes underwent, the steady intention almost of the whole life to this object. Books must be read as deliberately and reservedly as they are written.

Although, of course, the demand implies a Baconian discrimination of books (*Of Studies*):

> Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.

Consequently, when Longinus suggests the possibility that technique and nature may provide mutual support that results in perfection, he expresses the Greek—and Aristotelian—idea of *telos* or perfection. Aristotle defines nature (*Physics* 193b8-22) as the state of anything which, after undergoing change, reaches its *telos*, its final perfection or end.

**So many things. . .pleases him:** again Longinus demurs and deprecates himself. The phrase "so many things" seems at first to refer to the past few chapters, in which Longinus has been developing a "full theory," but in fact it includes both these chapters, his "exposition," and his "proofs," his "demonstration." He uses the term "critical judgment" with care, for that is what he requested of Terentianus in ch. 1. One hesitates to "psychologize" an author, especially when his phrases are conventional; but in the concluding clause "let each delight in what pleases him" one senses that Longinus is aware of how little impact he is going to have on his world. And it is a fact that aside from this text, we seem to find no mention of him in all the ancient literature that survives.

## Chapter 37

# Similes

PARABLES and likenesses (we must, you see, return to our subject) are neighbors of metaphors, differing only in this

*[a lacuna of 2 leaves (4 pages or about 4%) occurs here]*

**parables:** Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1393a28 ff.) distinguishes between two kinds of examples or illustrations: one is the example proper, *i.e.*, an historical analogy; the other is the "parable," *i.e.*, an imaginary fable or analogue, or even an apologue. If, for example, we draw an analogy between Caesar and Napoleon, we have used Caesar as an illustrative example; if, however we make up a little story—like a fable by Aesop or like Socrates' myth of the cave—then we have a parable. Jesus' parables in the New Testament are the most famous examples of this device. Aristotle observes (1394a1 ff.) that parables are appropriate to public speeches because they are numerous and easy to find or make up, whereas historical examples are harder to find; on the other hand, he says, historical examples are more telling, since we expect the future to be like the past.

**likenesses:** the Greek word gives us our English "icon." In the *Rhetoric* (1406b20 ff.), Aristotle says that they are a species of metaphor: his definition corresponds to our "simile," that is, a metaphor which contains the word "as" or "like." The rhetorical handbooks generally preserve this distinction, which they elaborate by saying that it is a point-for-point comparison of the parts of two things (Spengel III.104, 108, 240, etc.).

## Chapter 38

# Hyperbole

. . .and such examples as: "Unless you carry your brains in your feet and tramp on them." For this reason one must know how far each thing may extend to its limit. You see, sometimes falling too far outside the limit destroys the hyperbole, and by being hypertensed such expressions become slack, and there are even times when they turn things around into their

**tramp on them:** the chapter lacks a beginning because of the lacuna of about two manuscript pages. The passage with which the fragmentary chapter begins appears in a speech attributed to Demosthenes (*On Halonnesus* 45); this passage, as Russell notes, was used even in antiquity to prove the speech spurious, because of its colloquial vulgarity: the ancient *argument* against the speech remarks on the lack of restraint displayed in the reviling tone of the language. Longinus seems to have objected to this hyperbole also, for his following remarks emphasize the need for knowing when not to go too far.

**hyperbole:** a technique for exaggerating things up or down for dramatic effect. Aristotle uses "hyperbole" both in a general sense meaning "excess" (*Rhetoric* 1463a2) and as a technical term in rhetoric (1413a22): colloquial hyperboles, he says, are really metaphors, *e.g.*, such English phrases as "chicken-hearted" or "lily-livered" or "bird-brained" or "her teeth were like stars—they came out every night." Such hyperboles are examples of "undergraduate wit" (see ch. 3), he adds, and are characteristic of intense anger; the device is most used by Attic orators and is not suitable for older men. Aristotle's example of poetic hyperbole comes from the *Iliad* (9.385, 388-90), where Achilles rejects Agamemnon's offer in hyperbolic vehemence:

> Not if he should give me gifts as
> many in number
> as sand or dust. . .I will not marry
> the daughter of Agamemnon, son
> of Atreus, not
> if she vied with Aphrodite in
> beauty and Athena
> in skills.

The Greeks distinguished two kinds of hyperbole, which may be glossed by the English terms "overstatement" and "understatement." Hyperbole which exaggerates in order to magnify is a kind of development; hyperbole which exaggerates in order to cut down is a kind of belittling. The first allows a comic delivery; the second, which is close to being irony, requires a "straight face," or what the Venerable Bede calls *gravitas pronuntiationis* (Halm p. 615).

The handbooks are in general agreement that hyperbole is a speech which goes beyond the truth, and some even see Longinus' point that it can make things bigger or smaller. Demetrius (*On Style* 124-27) divides hyperbole into three kinds:

1) similarity: they ran like the winds
2) pre-eminence: whiter than snow

opposites. 2. Now Isocrates (I don't know how) has engaged in this childish business because of his ambition for saying everything in a developed way. Though the basis of his *Panegyric* is that the city of Athens surpasses that of the Spartans in conferring good works on the Greeks, directly in the introduction he says:

3) impossibility: she hit her head on the sky.

It would be hard, sometimes, to distinguish betwen metaphor (and simile) and hyperbole, for they are often combined, *e.g.*, as when Mercutio "amplifies" on the smallness of Queen Mab (*Romeo and Juliet* I.iv), or when Romeo says (II.ii):

What light through yonder
window breaks?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!

Timon's line (*Timon of Athens* I.ii), though it does not really fit any of Demetrius' three categories, is clearly hyperbolic:

Methinks I could deal kingdoms
to my friends,
And ne'er be weary.

Marlowe's line "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships?" is a hyperbole; Henn (p. 45) quotes Shakespeare's imitation of it (*Troilus and Cressida* II.ii), of which, as he says, "The explosive suddenness is lost, the image is weakened and expanded, the rhythm has completely changed":

Is she worth keeping? Why, she is
a pearl,
Whose price hath launched above
a thousand ships,
And turned crowned kings to
merchants.

**childish business:** the phrase is an oxymoron in Greek, for it juxtaposes the roots for "business" or "action" and "passion," in violation of what Russell calls the more normal idiom. Behind the oxymoron lies the paradoxical but true definition given by Aristotle in the *Poetics* (1452b11) of an emotion as a kind of action and his description of hyperbole as a characteristic of the young. Isocrates had a passion for development, says Longinus (see ch. 11), and hyperbole is used for development.

***Panegyric:*** the title recalls the imagery of athletic competition sustained throughout the past few chapters. Since this is generally accounted the greatest of Isocrates' speeches, and since he spent ten years composing it, Longinus is almost malicious to discover an error "right in the *introduction*," a word on which he puns because of its etymological connection with "hyperbole." Of course, he is entitled to be a little malicious, since Isocrates challenges his readers, right in the introduction, to find anything wrong with his *chef d'oeuvre:* one can see Longinus picking up the *Panegyric,* reading those presumptuous words—Isocrates says that he is even going to disdain the normal function of an introduction, to dispose the readers towards his subject—and then saying, "Why you old—I'll do just that."

We should remember, however, before passing judgment on Isocrates, that he was in his nineties when he wrote the speech; that he had labored over it for years; and that at the end (187) he sadly confesses that he has not spoken up to the worth of his theme. When he let the speech be published as is, he may have forgotten this discrepancy, or he may

> Speeches have a capability so great as to be able both to make great things low and to set greatness around petty things—both to say old things in a novel way and to express new occurrences in an antique guise.

Now, then, someone might say, "Isocrates, are you actually about to interchange thus Spartan and Athenian matters?" He has, you see, almost set his encomium of speeches and writings as a pronouncement and notice to his hearers to feel a lack of confidence in him. 3. Now perhaps the most excellent hyperboles (as we also said earlier when we dealt with figures) are those which escape our notice that they are hyperboles. This happens whenever, from utter emotion, they are voiced in conjunction with some great dramatic circumstance; this is just what Thucydides does when he describes the men perishing in Sicily. He says:

have deliberately let it stand, hoping that readers would be as charitable as Milton and remember that he died as he lived, upholding Greek culture in the face of the Athenian defeat at Chaeronea, which

> Killed with report that old man eloquent.

To this we must add two other things: one, Isocrates said, in the "introduction" to his epideictic speech *Helen,* that one should not criticize others unless one were willing himself to "descend into the arena" as a competitor, and that his speech on Helen was competitive; two, that Isocrates never delivered his speeches because of his weak voice—in contrast to Demosthenes, who overcame his weak voice by assiduous exercise.

If we put these allusions together, we find that Longinus is mocking Isocrates—that rhetorical theorist *par excellence*—for having made an error not only in the introduction of his greatest speech, but also in his theory.

**encomium:** Isocrates intends his definition of rhetoric to serve as a means of emphasizing and exaggerating the worth of his subject; such a statement, however, would be appropriate as the "introduction" to a rhetorical handbook; but as the "prelude" to an epideictic speech it is sadly lacking.

An encomium ought to start from the birth and nature of the thing being praised: Isocrates' definition suggests a bastard parentage for rhetoric, such as Plato attacked in his dialogue the *Gorgias*—named for that rhetorician who introduced this base idea of rhetoric into Athens.

**as we said. . .hyperboles:** the earlier statement of the principle occurred in 17.1. The American sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens used to teach his pupils: "Develop technique and then hide it." (quoted in *Time* magazine, Nov. 21, 1969, p. 61 [Canadian ed.]).

**He says:** the passage comes from Thucydides 7.84. Russell points out that Longinus is concerned with the literary effect and does not ask whether the facts be historically true. Both Russell and Grube, throughout their notes, are dis-

> The Syracusans came down after them and slaughtered those in the river, and at once the water was polluted; but nevertheless it was drunk bloodied as it was and muddied, and many fought over it.

The preeminence and dramatic circumstance of the emotion assure us that although blood and mud were being drunk, still they were things to be fought over. 4. Also similar is the Herodotean passage describing the men at Thermopylae; he says:

> Here as they defended themselves with knives—as many as still happened to have them—and with hands and mouths, the barbarians buried them.

Here you will say, "What sort of thing is this fighting with mouths against armored men?" and "whatever kind of thing is 'being buried with mis-

turbed because the examples chosen by Longinus do not seem to be true hyperboles, although Grube recognizes that the solution to the problem probably lies in the lacuna. There Longinus must have given his definition of hyperbole. Since it is his custom not to use the technical terms of rhetoric with the rigidity found in the handbooks, we may expect that both his definition and critical practice were broader and more inclusive than those either found in the handbooks or used by modern critics like Russell and Grube, who are disturbed because so many of Longinus' examples in this chapter are not technically hyperboles. Russell is even more rigorous than Grube, who says that the passage from Herodotus is a "true hyperbole"; Russell thinks it is not. Longinus uses the term as he uses most rhetorical terms—with full awareness of their normal as well as technical meaning. See above, note on **hyperbole.**

**pre-eminence and dramatic circumstances of the emotion:** Longinus here combines the three elements which make up his working definition of hyperbole: an emotion characterized by height, or sublimity, and by actual dramatic circumstances. The passage quoted from Isocrates lacks all three; that quoted from Thucydides has all three—even if it lacked the external form of hyperbole as defined by the handbooks, it nevertheless exemplifies by its very austerity Longinus' conception; the passage quoted from Herodotus has all three plus the technical form. The sequence of quotations is beautifully arranged, as is usual in Longinus.

**he says:** from Herodotus 7.225.3. Longinus selects a moment marked by high emotion and dramatic circumstance; from Herodotus' words he selects two details which reveal what he thought hyperbole was: men using their teeth to fight armed enemies so numerous as to bury the defenders alive. In the second we have a clear metaphor exaggerated enough to qualify technically as a hyperbole; in the first we have so great a

siles'?"; notwithstanding this, it carries credence: you see, the matter was not, in my opinion, taken up for the sake of the hyperbole, but the hyperbole was bred with good reason by the situation. 5. You see—as I never stop saying—the works and emotions which come near to ecstasy are a release and a cure-all for every audaciousness in spoken and written style; as a result, even comic things, and they, certainly, fall off into a lack of the believable, are persuasive because they are laughable.

For he had a farmland small as a Laconic letter.

6. Laughter, you see, is actually an emotion of pleasure. And hyperboles, just as they apply to what is greater, also apply to what is lesser, since indeed exaggeration is common to both: and in a way ridicule is a development of what is low.

discrepancy between our normal expectation of how men behave and the intensity of their conduct in this particular circumstance that, as in the previous quotation from Thucydides, the mere statement of fact becomes hyperbole. Such is what is meant by Longinus' general observation (35.3) on what is "contrary to expectation."

**with good reason:** a play on words that is not translatable. Literally, the Greek word means "having a good *logos*"; from it we derive our English "eulogy." The verbal form means "to speak well of," "to give a good account of," "to be reasonable," and "to speak finely." Longinus probably intends all of these, for his last specimen of hyperbole combines a rational use of the device applied to a situation of high emotion and dramatic circumstance, all combined in a "good speech or writing" that is at the same time a eulogy of the dead Greeks.

**For he had a farmland:** the source of the quotation is unknown. Strabo (1.2.30) speaks of hyperbolic hyperboles—*e.g.*, "paler than the ghost of an albino," or Churchill's famous description of Russian foreign policy as "a mystery wrapped inside of a riddle hidden in an enigma." Among the samples which Strabo cites is the same one used by Longinus, except that in Strabo's text the word "Laconic" modifies "letter." This is a pun which we can translate into English, since the word "laconic" means "brief," "terse," "condensed." Spartan speech was notoriously terse: Demetrius (8) cites a letter sent by Sparta to Philip, which consisted of only three words: "Dionysius, in Corinth"—that is, Philip should remember the case of the tyrant Dionysius, once a powerful ruler like Philip but now a poor schoolteacher living in Corinth, the ancient Paris. As Demetrius observes, the pithiness has an "intense animus," like a wild beast "straining" to leap; if, he says, you "stretch out" the statement, it becomes a narrative and loses its power to "stun."

**Laughter. . .pleasure:** the word "pleasure" is also a technical term in rhetoric to signify a "pleasing touch." Longinus is probably using the term in both the

technical and generic senses.

Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* (1371b35) says that playfulness and laughter are "pleasant." He says too (1371a27) that men take pleasure in a "hyperbole" or excess of psychic state, since variation is pleasant. Demetrius (126 and 161) says that comedy produces delight by means of impossible hyperboles.

In 40.2, Longinus indicates that there can be sublimity in comedy. Since one can be in "ecstasy" (*i.e.*, beside oneself) with laughter as well as with grief, by Longinan standards there can be comic sublimity.

## Chapter 39

# Rhythm

THE fifth of those constituents resulting in sublimity which we set forth at the beginning is still left for us, my best friend: what sort of thing arrangement is in speaking and writing. Having represented amply

**The fifth:** Longinus is about to analyze the last of his five constituents of sublimity (8.2), which, he said, included all the others: a synthesis which is characterized by worth and loftiness. For all of his elaborate parentheses and seeming digressions and playfulness, he never loses sight of his outline, which lies beneath the flesh of his speech like a skeleton.

**beginning:** not, of course, at the beginning of the book, but at the end of the second part of the speech, the exposition. This is followed by the demonstration or proof. An exposition has its own beginning, middle, and end (Julius Severianus, Halm, p. 357). The end of an exposition, of course, is to be subtly blended with the beginning of the next part (Fortunatianus, Halm, p. 113).

**arrangement:** elsewhere we have translated this (in Greek, *synthesis*) word as "the way things are set together," a circumlocutory version which simply will not fit into the syntax of this chapter.

Since language is the only medium in which occur both artistic activity and the criticism of that activity, and since the Greeks were masters of both, we should expect to find in them the most minute analysis of the medium itself. Aristotle, both in the *Poetics* (1456b19 ff.) and, more extensively, in his book *On the Structure of Sentences,* starts with the fundamental unit of language: the sound. His treatment is brief and clinical; for an aesthetic application of the elements we must turn to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, whose principal work is entitled *On the Way to Set Words Together.* In ch. 2, Dionysius says:

> In the case of all the other arts which employ various materials and produce from them a composite result—arts such as building, carpentry, embroidery, and the like—the faculties of composition are second in order of time to those of selection, but are nevertheless of greater importance. Hence it must not be thought abnormal that the same principle obtains with respect to discourse.
>
> (tr. Rhys Roberts)

In ch. 6, Dionysius takes up the analogy of building and elaborates it. As the builder must study the nature and condition of his materials, improve them where he can and work with them where he cannot, so must the writer do. The building-blocks of literature are words, but they are not literally atoms, for they can be altered by dialectical spellings, cases, tenses, moods, voices, genders, plurals, singulars, and so forth. These units must, after being modified according to their nature and the builder's plans, be set together. The let-

what I have to say on this subject in two works—as much as I could establish in theorizing—we may for the present put in only as much as provides a necessary basis, namely, that a fitting harmony is not only a kind of natural instrument for persuasion and pleasure in human beings, but it is also a wonderful one for achieving its effects with freedom and emotion.
2. You see, though, on the one hand, the flute instils certain kinds of

ters make the words, the words make phrases, the phrases make clauses, the clauses make sentences, and so forth. Dionysius devotes his book primarily to the first two items in this list: the letters and the words. Demetrius, in his book *On the Structure of Sentences,* deals with the larger units, the phrases, the clauses, and the sentences. Rhetoric as a whole was concerned with the entire group.

The procedure follows the pattern of Greek education (25):

> When we are taught to read, first we learn the names of the letters, then their forms and their values, then in due course syllables and their modifications, and finally words and their properties.
>
> (tr. Rhys Roberts)

A subject so complicated deserves its own treatment, and as Longinus is about to say, he has dealt with it separately. What we have in the next four chapters is a quick survey of the subject: its basis and some examples: taken as a unit, chs. 39-43 are themselves a separate "speech" which follows the same four-part form as the larger "speech" in which it is embedded.

**fitting harmony:** the word "fitting harmony" is in English most closely associated with music, but it is far more generic in Greek; if any metaphorical sense be intended, it comes from carpentry. As Rhys Roberts observes (in the glossary to his edition of Dionysius' *On Composition*), Greek carpenters preferred dove-tailing to nails. To convey this multiple set of nuances, we have used the phrase "fitting harmony."

**with freedom:** many editors emend "with freedom" to "greatness of address," but there is strong evidence that the ms. tradition is correct. In 21.2, Longinus compares clauses linked by connectives to runners whose limbs are shackled: the connectives take away the "freedom" of the sentence to "run" and destroy the effect of having been let loose from a catapult. Both "freedom" and "instrument" are conjoined here in the crux-passage as well.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Composition* 22) confirms both the literary use of "free" and its intimate connection with the arrangement of the "austere" style:

> In its clauses it pursues. . .impressive and stately rhythms and tries to make its clauses not parallel in structure or sound, nor *slaves* to a rigid sequence, but noble, brilliant, and *free.* It wishes them to suggest *nature rather than art,* and to *stir emotion rather than to reflect character.*
>
> (tr. Rhys Roberts; italics ours)

It is better to take these as separate qualities which may be attained by an expert at arrangement.

**You see:** this sentence consumes about 190 words in Greek; partly as is normal

emotion in the audience, so as to make it go out of its senses and become full of corybantic frenzy, and, placing in it a kind of rhythmic step, it makes it

and partly because of the compound words in the original, which often take several English words to render, there are about 300 words in the English version. All translators thus far have observed Russell's dictum: "the complex must, of course, be broken up." We have, however, endeavored to keep the original syntax. Longinus wishes to demonstrate the point he has just made about arrangement: as if in epideictic bravura, he casts his enormous sentence into the form of a question consisting of two balanced clauses, "on the one hand," "on the other hand." The two clauses draw a negative analogy between music and writing based on the fact that arrangement—composition—exists in both. Yet despite the parallel form of the two kinds of composition, there is an essential difference in the nature of the material used in each: the notes of music have no meaning in themselves, whereas words do.

The musical part of the analogy is itself twofold: first the flute, which produces single notes; then the lyre, which produces chords. The verbal part of the analogy takes these up in inverse order, so that we have a chiastic arrangement. So, too, the effects peculiar to each instrument have their chiastic analogue in the clause "on the other hand." The sentence as a whole is a splendid explanation and demonstration of Longinus' argument—that arrangement is a kind of harmony plus meaning.

The next few notes comment on particular parts of the sentence.

**corybantic. . .step:** the flute was the instrument especially used in emotional and orgiastic rites, along with the drum: so Plato (*Republic* 398C ff.) and Aristotle (*Politics* 1341a21). "Corybantic" is not an honorific term in Longinus (see ch. 5), who uses it as a synonym for "Dionysiac" to show the kind of "gut-response" which certain kinds of music evoke, *e.g.*, contemporary "rock-and-roll."

The word "step" is to music what a foot is to meter, but the two dictions often overlap. About no part of Greek literary studies do we speak with less confidence and authority than the relationship between music and poetry: we cannot yet really scan much of Pindar and Simonides or choruses from Greek tragedy, and we have lost virtually all of Greek music, although some highly technical discussions of both meter and musical theory have survived. Analysis of Longinus' remarks in the next five chapters must, then, be highly tentative. We do know, however, that certain rhythms used in speech-writing were so well known that audiences could and did predict them: in ch. 41, for example, Longinus says that audiences sometimes stamped their feet, like a chorus, to keep step with the predictable rhythm used by the orator.

"Step" also has a technical meaning in rhetoric: a clause which connects the protasis and apodosis in an introduction. Since Longinus is dealing with arrangement, which includes all the other elements that make for sublimity, and since his long sentence is a recapitulation from start to finish of his whole work, and since this chapter is itself a miniature speech with all its parts, he may be playing on this sense of the word.

necessary for it to step to its beat and to assimilate itself ("even if it is altogether uncultivated") to the melody, and though the sounds made by the lyre (heaven knows), while they express nothing by themselves, still, by the variation of their sonorities and by their beating against one another and by their mixing in concord, often cast, as you know, a wonderful spell—[3.] and surely these are images and bastard imitations of persuasion, not, as I said, legitimately bred works of human nature—do we not, on the other hand, take it that arrangement, being a kind of harmony of that language which grows naturally in human beings and fastens itself to our

**assimilate:** the substantival form of the word is used by Plato to indicate man's supreme aim: to become similar to God (*Theaetetus* 176B). In both Plato and later Greek rhetorical theory the word is a generic term denoting "similitude" or "likeness"; its species are numerous (*e.g.*, parable, likeness, example, etc.). Longinus here is referring to the identification made by those listening to orgiastic music between themselves and the basic animal rhythms.

**"even if it is altogether uncultivated":** a famous quotation from Euripides (*Sthenoboea*—a lost play—fr. 663, Nauck); Aristophanes, Plato, and Plutarch all cite it (see Russell's note for the citations). Longinus starts with the lowest sense of rhythm in man, that which is, literally, "without music." As usual, he exploits even what Russell calls a "very hackneyed quotation indeed" in his own way, for he is punning on the root of the word, which refers both to music and the Muses (see ch. 38 for a similar pun). Orgiastic music is, of course, "uncultivated."

**express. . .by themselves:** musical notes have no "meaning," either naturally or by convention, whether taken separately or in chords. Words, on the other hand, do have meaning, at least by convention, as Aristotle shows in *On the Structure of Sentences* (16c), where he says that they are "symbols" of the emotions common in the human soul. In the *Rhetoric* (1404a21), he says that words are imitations, since the voice is the most imitative of all man's parts. The lyre is a "step" above the flute, for it can strike chords as well as single notes and achieve a kind of *arrangement* and "variation"; hence it is closer to speeches and writings, to *logos*. But it lacks the essential element of meaning, and hence is only a "spell."

**spell:** because "spells" are verbal, Longinus can use the word with singular aptness here as his brief hierarchy of musical instruments approaches closer and closer to the power of language. Music for the Greeks was a form of imitation: see Aristotle (*Poetics* 1447a15 ff.), who says that most music for the flute and the lyre is imitative, although it employs only rhythm and fitting harmony. It conspicuously lacks speech.

**persuasion:** Longinus uses the word "persuasion" as his symbol for the teleological order of the cosmos: man's purpose is to imitate the hierarchical order of the heavens by means of the political institutions which man establishes on earth, for such is his true "assimilation" to the gods (see above

very soul, not just to our sense of hearing, exciting diversified ideas of words, conceptions, situations, finenesses, melodiousness, all coming into being at our creation and being reared up with us, and, simultaneously, by a varied mixing of sound, driving into the souls of those nearby the emotions which are stirring in the speaker, and over and over again making the hearers stand with him in communion, and making the greatnesses fit harmoniously together with the structuring of styles in speaking and writing, do we not then take it that by these very modes arrangement enchants us and at the same time on each occasion puts us in the mood for boldness and a sense of worth and sublimity and everything which it includes in itself, completely and really prevailing over our perceptiveness in every way? But even if it be madness to question things so agreed upon, experiment, you see, is an

and ch. 35). Persuasion operates by speech, as the famous *logos*-hymn of Isocrates expressed and as Isocrates restated with comparable eloquence in his *Panegyric* (47-50): speech is what distinguishes man from the rest of the animals; liberal education is manifest most conspicuously in speech; Athens has become the teacher of *logos* to the rest of Greece, and made the name "Greek" refer not to a race but to intelligence and perceptiveness. What Isocrates says here is what all Greek culture says, explicitly or implicitly, and his words are still the most magnificent phrasing ever given to the idea which is the essence of western civilization. Only by *logos* can we persuade ourselves and others to action.

For Isocrates, politics was the essential and highest mode of man's being; therefore he set himself to influencing directly the politics of Greece. Plato and Aristotle, although concerned vitally with the theory of politics, made either no direct attempts to influence it or abortive ones. It is no accident that Longinus' hero—the hero of all rhetorical theorists—is Demosthenes, who even more than Isocrates directly affected political life, for he delivered his own speeches, in which he showed perfect mastery of political *logos*, whereas Isocrates only taught others how to deliver speeches.

Speech, then, is at once the product of nature, the distinguishing characteristic of human nature, and the means by which the essence of human nature—the soul—is moved.

Music is mimetic but not truly so, for nature is a cosmos with order and meaning; that order and that meaning cannot be imitated by music.

**communion:** a favorite word among the neo-Platonists (LSJ). Longinus is referring to that sense of unity which comes over a crowd when a great orator speaks.

**madness:** the huge sentence preceding is now over; it is almost an incredible joke for Longinus to speak of the "madness of going through this difficult passage," especially since the principles and premises are "agreed upon." Readers who have struggled through our translation will be in a better position both to appreciate the joke and to sympathize with Terentianus.

ample proof. 4. The concept which Demosthenes brings into his proposal is sublime—in my opinion—and is in reality wonderful:

> This vote made the danger hanging over the city pass away like a cloud.

But this was voiced with a harmony not inferior to the perceptiveness. It was spoken, you see, generally in dactyllic rhythms, and these are what are most nobly bred and productive of greatness: for this reason we understand that the heroic measure is the finest meter. And the. . .since certainly, if you rearrange the words—wherever you want to—out of their peculiar places:

> this vote, just like a cloud, made the danger hanging over the city pass away,

or if (heaven knows) you chop away one syllable only,

> made it pass away like a cloud,

**his proposal:** the reference is to a speech by Demosthenes (*On the Crown* 188), in which Athens, alarmed by Philip's steady advance, voted to prepare for war and to make an alliance with Thebes. Russell remarks that the text is spurious here. The passage is nevertheless a splendid example of Longinus' theory about dramatic circumstance.

**heroic measure:** *i.e.*, the hexameter, the "stateliest measure ever wielded by the lips of man," as Tennyson describes it in his poem *To Virgil*. He is, of course, following Aristotle, who uses the same words of it in the *Poetics* (1459b34): "the heroic is the stateliest and most swelling of the meters." Tennyson is saying, then, that Virgil know how to "wield" this measure, not that his hexameters were statelier than Homer's.

**And the:** there is a small lacuna of several words.

**their peculiar places:** Longinus does not quote his source exactly. It is unlikely, since we are not likely ever to know how ancient Greek was pronounced, that we can appreciate the point that Longinus makes here and in the rest of the chapter, except by rough analogies with English. Here, for example, is a sentence from William Butler Yeats' musical prose, in which he describes how he came to write his poem *The Lake Isle of Innisfree:*

> From the sudden remembrance came my poem *Innisfree,* my first lyric with anything in its rhythm of my own music.
>
> from *The Trembling of a Veil*

If we transfer the closing phrase "of my own music," with its three long vowels in a row to its more idiomatic position, before the three short vowels of "in its rhythm," we will destroy the music of the passage and, to that extent, lessen the impact of the sense. Instead of clos-

you will understand how greatly a harmony resonates with sublimity. You see, the very phrase "just like a cloud" begins with its first long rhythms, measured out with four metrical beats, but were one syllable taken out of the phrase—"like a cloud"—it at once de-heightens the greatness by the syncope; furthermore, if you should stretch out the phrase:—

made it pass away just as if a cloud—

while it expresses the same thing, the same effect does not strike our ears,

ing with a sequence of long vowels, the sentence will end with four short vowels.

Or, to take another example:

> I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and seeks her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat.
>
> Milton, *Areopagitica*

If we transfer the closing five words anywhere else in the sentence, once again we destroy the *arrangement.*

**you will understand:** a few modern examples will help make this point dramatically clear. Compare Burns' line

> O my love's like a red, red rose,

with this re-writing of it:

> My love is like a red, red rose.

In the first, the rhythm makes us emphasize "love" and "red, red rose"; in the second, the word "like" receives an equal emphasis and thus directs the attention away from the poet's feeling for the girl to the comparison itself.

Or, leave the word "the" out of the second verse of Psalm 23 (KJV):

> He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

If you do, the metrical balance of "in green pastures" and "the still waters" will be destroyed.

**de-heightens. . .syncope:** the verb "de-heighten" means originally in Greek "to cut off the prow or beak of a ship"; by extension it means "to mutiliate by cutting off the hands and *feet,*" "to amputate." Longinus uses it here partly for its own punning sense and partly for the pun which he is preparing (see next note). The word "syncope" is transliterated from the Greek, "a cutting up into small pieces"; then, by extension, "a cutting off." In grammar, both Greek and English, it signifies a reduction in the number of syllables in a word by cutting out one or more letters, *e.g.,* "over" to "o'er." Compare the English derivative "syncopation" in music.

We may take Patrick Henry's famous saying, "Give me liberty or give me death"; insert the word "my" before "liberty" or "death" and see how the rhythm and the tone are destroyed. Or add "unto" after "like" in the opening sentence of Bacon's essay *Of Suspicion:*

> Suspicions amongst thoughts are like bats amongst birds. . .

Such an addition destroys the crispness and abruptness both of the comparison itself and of the rhythm produced by the four monosyllables "thoughts are like bats"; it lessens the impact of the caesural effect of the two cola: "suspicions amongst thoughts" and "are like bats amongst birds"; it reduces the power of the alliteration "bats" and "birds,"

because the abruptness slips away with the lengthening of the long time intervals and the sublimity slackens.

which contributes to the abrupt rhythm of the sentence; and it diminishes the stress produced by the contrasting polysyllable "suspicions" and the monosyllable "bats" by making the voice rise on "like unto." Compare the two versions of Burns' line in the preceding note.

**abruptness. . .sublimity:** the set of wordplays which began with "steps long" reaches it climax in the closing words of the paragraph. In the word "abruptness," Longinus recalls his earlier use of the term (12.4), where he was comparing Demosthenes and Cicero. Both there and here the word is closely connected with "sublimity" and ascribed to Demosthenes. It is possible, here in ch. 39, to take "abruptness" as a noun and the subject of the sentence (as we have construed it) or as an adjective modifying "sublimity." If construed the second way, the passage would read:

> the abrupt sublimity slips away with the lengthening of the long time intervals and slackens.

The root of the Greek word "abrupt" is one of several Greek verbs for "cut"; hence the phrase could be translated "the cut-off" or "chopped-off sublimity." Were it not for the pejorative associations of the word, English "choppy" could be used.

The word "length" is used technically in prosody to signify a long syllable; such long syllables contributed to solemnity and impressiveness and sublimity, as both Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Composition* 17) and Demetrius (183) point out.

## Chapter 40

# Rhythm and Diction

AND most important among those things which make for greatness in speech is the setting together of the members, as in living bodies: though one member sheared off from the rest has nothing in itself worthy of rational speech, all combined together complete a perfect system; thus, though greatnesses, scattered from each other, carry away their sublimity

**members:** the Greek word means primarily a "member" or part of a whole, like the limb of a body; by analogy it comes to refer to a member or phrase of music, and then melody or lyric song. Longinus is playing on these two meanings—corporeal and musical— and applying both analogically to the phrases and clauses of speech.

**as in living bodies:** the links between this chapter and ch. 10 are forged by this analogy. Plato, in both the *Phaedrus* (264C) and the *Philebus* (64B), compares speech to the way a living creature is put together. So too Aristotle (*Poetics* 1450b35) argues thus:

> Furthermore, a fine object, whether a living creature or everything put together from parts, ought not only to have its parts arranged but also to have a kind of greatness.

Since art is an imitation of nature, and since the works of nature for Plato, Aristotle, and Longinus, have an organic wholeness, the work of art, when successful, should have a similar organic wholeness.

**one member sheared off:** Demetrius (2) uses the same analogy:

> Sometimes the member constitutes not a complete sentence, but a part of it, yet a complete part. For just as the arm, which is a whole of a certain kind, has parts such as fingers and forearms which themselves are wholes, inasmuch as each of them has proper limits, and itself is made up of parts; so also a complete sentence, when it is extensive, may very well comprise within itself parts which themselves are integral.
>
> (tr. Rhys Roberts)

Similarly, Galen (*On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body* 1.347) says that if a part of the body lacked usefulness, we would cut it off; if a part lacked action, we would deny usefulness to the whole.

**perfect system:** the adjective "perfect" (lit., "final") describes that which has reached its end (*telos*). Behind the word lies an "organic" conception of the cosmos, which as a whole, and in its parts which are themselves wholes made up out of elements, is either perfect or developing towards a perfection, even though the perfection be transient. Aristotle defines "nature" as that stage in a thing's development when it has reached

with them in various directions, when by their common association they form a body and, in addition, are clasped in a harmonious bond, they make a voice by their very periodic form. Actually, in periodic sentences, greatness is almost a contribution made by a multiplicity of elements. 2. But we have, in fact, made it sufficiently clear that many prose-writers and poets, although not naturally sublime, and perhaps even lacking in greatness,

its end (*telos*).

"System" is a transliteration of the Greek word; its root means literally "to stand together, to put together," so as to form a whole. Paul (*Colossians* 1:16-17) says:

> For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible. . .all things were created by him and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

So Peter (2 Peter 3.5) says that the earth was put together from water by the *logos* of God. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Art of Rhetoric* 10.6) says that Demosthenes imitated Plato in seeking to make his speeches organic wholes: he paraphrases Plato (*Phaedrus* 264B-C), saying that a speech ought to be like a body which has its members appropriate to one another—to be like "the whole system of the body." The word is also used to signify a musical scale and a metrical scale (LSJ).

**periodic sentences. . .multiplicity:** Grube argues (articles in *The American Journal of Philology*, 1957) that the word "period" in Longinus does not refer to the periodic sentence (see ch. 11, n. on **periodically**). Because of the metaphor in the word "contribution," he takes the word here to signify the courses in a feast.

Since, however, it is Longinus' habit either to use terms different from those in the handbooks, or to use the same words but differently—allusively, punningly, originally, expansively—such a variation of the *argumentum ex silentio* is not needed. For example, Longinus does not use the technical words for "phrase" and "clause"; but here in ch. 40 it is clear that the word "member" covers both.

Furthermore, both the subjects of ch. 39 and 40 are directly related to the periodic sentence. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Composition* 2) says:

> The combination or juxtaposition of these parts [of speech]. . . forms the "members" (or clauses) of a sentence. Further, the fitting together of these clauses constitutes what are termed the "periods," and these make up the complete discourse. The function of composition is to put words together in an appropriate order, to assign a suitable connexion to clauses and to distribute the whole discourse properly into periods.
>
> (tr. Rhys Roberts)

Both Dionysius (19) and Demetrius (13) praise a style which combines periods with other kinds of sentence; and Dionysius says that even within periods some should interweave a larger number of clauses.

None of the writers who deal with periods at length—despite their frequent mention and praise of Plato—quotes any of his huge sentences, which Longinus often imitates.

still, using words that are common and ordinary which do not lead to too much of anything in themselves, by the way they place them together and make them fit, throw around themselves a rough dignity and avoid getting

The word "contribution" refers to the Greek custom of what we call "pot-luck" dinners; each participant "chips in" something to fill out the meal. By extension it came to refer to the financial share paid by each diner at a feast. The short sentence here follows Longinus' usual pattern: a long analytic period at the end of which comes a short epigrammatic, often metaphorical example. The point is the same: the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. "Multiplicity" signifies the number of clauses; "periodic" their arrangement; "greatness" the bonus.

**words...common and ordinary...make them fit:** Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Composition* 3) makes the same point, citing a passage from Homer as an example:

> The diction consists. . .of the most ordinary, the humblest words, such as might have been used off-hand by a farmer, a seaman, an artisan, or anybody else who takes no account of elegant speech. . . they [the lines] contain neither noble metaphors. . .nor any other figurative language; nor yet many unusual terms, nor foreign or new-coined words. What alternative, then, is left but to attribute the beauty of the style to the composition?

Wordsworth, in the *Preface of Lyrical Ballads*, says that he sought to make all of the poems in that volume operate by this method: "to choose incidents and situations from *common* life, and to relate or describe them. . .in a selection of *language really used by men*. . .to make these interesting by tracing in them, *truly* though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our *nature:* chiefly as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of *excitement*. . . because in that condition the essential passions of the heart. . .speak a *plainer and more emphatic language*" (compare Dionysius, chs. 12 and 20). Quite consciously Wordsworth acknowledged that this method "cut me off from a large portion of phrases and *figures of speech* which. . .have long been regarded as the common inheritance of poets" (throughout these quotations the italics have been ours).

Coleridge (*Biographica Literaria,* chs. 14 ff.) discusses Wordsworth's choice of "real" language—for which Coleridge wished to substitute the term "ordinary"; in ch. 18, he analyzes a poem of Wordsworth's in terms remarkably parallel to those of Dionysius. We may also compare Arnold's distinction between the "simple" language of Wordsworth's *Michael* and the "simplistic" language of Tennyson's *Dora.*

**rough dignity:** Longinus is referring to a glottal phenomenon resulting from the collocation of certain clusters of consonants: the words must be pronounced separately, with spaces or time-intervals between. Dionysius treats the subject in many places; he associates it most explicitly with the "austere" or grand style (*e.g.,* Pindar and Thucydides: *On Composition* 22). Browning's notorious line exemplifies the principle grotesquely:

> Irks care the cropfilled bird?

a low opinion—as is shown by Philistus (among many others), Aristophanes in some passages, Euripides in most. 3. Of course, you know what Euripides' Heracles says after the slaughter of his children:

I'm packed with ills, no place to put them left to me,

a remark spoken in an intensely ordinary way, but it has come to be sublime

The effect is, when well-used, one of "rough dignity."

**Philistus:** an historian of the fourth century B.C.; he wrote a history of Sicily from its earliest times on in a manner so imitative of Thucydides that Cicero (*Letters to His Brother Quintus* 2.13.4) called him rich, acute, terse, "almost a petit Thucydides." Dionysius of Halicarnassus discusses Philistus both in his letter to Pompeius (section 5) and in the fragmentary work *On Imitation* (Usener-Rademacher ed., VI, 208). He says that Philistus had a subservient and low nature; that he avoided Thucydidean peculiarities and imitated the terseness and the opinions (*sententiae*) but not in fineness of language or pregnancy of thought; that he was weak in figures and variety; but that he did have a euphony and was a better model for actual court-cases.

**Aristophanes:** in ch. 38, Longinus suggested that there can be comic ecstasy. He mentioned comic hyperbole as producing such an effect, and Aristophanes uses hyperbole frequently.

That comedy can be sublime, at least in part, is not, of course, impossible; Dryden praises Congreve in words that do not always emphasize his comic genre (*To My Dear Friend Mr. Congreve*):

Till you, the best Vitruvius, come at length;
Our beauties equal, but excel our strength.
Firm Doric pillars found your solid base;
The fair Corinthian crowns the higher space. . .
So bold, yet so judiciously you dare
That your least praise is to be regular.
Time, place, and action may with pains be wrought;
But genius must be born, and never can be taught.
This is your portion; this your native store;
Heav'n, that but once was prodigal before,
To Shakespeare gave as much; she could not give him more.

**Heracles says. . .children:** from *Hercules Mad* (1245). The word translated "packed" is, in Greek, generally used of ships laden with cargo. It appears to have been colloquial to the point of vulgarity. But Dionysius of Halicarnassus argues, with sound tolerance (*On Composition* 12), in defense of such language:

> And, in my opinion, we ought not to feel shy of using any noun or verb, however hackneyed, unless it carries with it some shameful association; for I venture to assert that no part of speech which signifies a person or thing will prove so mean, squalid, or otherwise offensive as to have no fitting

proportionately to the molding of the sentence: if you fit the sentence together differently, it will appear to you why Euripides is a poet of arrangement more than of thought. And in treating Dirce, when she was swept away by the bull, he says:

> if he chanced to turn
> Somewhere around, he dragged. . . and took at once
> Oak, rock, woman, over and over again exchanging
> each.

place in discourse.
(tr. Rhys Roberts)

**sublime proportionately:** once again Longinus links these chapters with his fivefold division. As in 8.1 he spoke of "the molding of figures"—the third of the five elements which make for sublimity—so here in ch. 40 he speaks of a sublimity which comes simply from the "molding" of the sentence.

**poet of arrangement:** we must be careful not to misinterpret the word "of" in the phrase "poet of arrangement"; Russell, who makes this point well, renders the passage: "it is the arrangement rather than the sense of which Euripides is the poet," *i.e.*, "poet" in the sense of "maker," the one who "makes" or "works out" the arrangement. Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1404b1-25) discusses the steady movement in Greek tragedy from unusual diction to the speech of ordinary men, and at the end of the passage he praises Euripides as the initiator of the trend.

The distinction between Euripides as poet of arrangement and poet of thought (*nous*) may seem at first not altogether flattering; but since, for Longinus, arrangement includes all the other elements of sublimity, we may assume that the distinction is not cutting. If we possessed the two lost books on arrangement, we could be more confident; Longinus' summary of the connection existing between arrangement and "solid thrust of conception" is extremely brief; for the full discussion he simply refers us to the now lost books.

**he says:** from a lost tragedy, the *Antiope* (fr. 221, Nauck); considerable fragments survive, one of which is cited by Plato (*Gorgias* 484C-486D) as a splendid expression of the contest between the active and contemplative lives. Russell gives a summary of the complicated plot.

The quotation illustrates Longinus' point, made earlier in the chapter, that sublimity is achieved by setting words together so that their consonants produce a distance between them. The effect can be ugly, as in the line from Browning quoted earlier (see above, n. on **rough dignity**), or powerful and solemn, as in these lines from *Paradise Lost* (II.620-24), where we see the fallen angels exploring hell:

> O'er many a frozen, many a Fiery
> Alp,
> Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs,
> dens, and shades of death,
> A universe of death, which God
> by curse
> Created evil, for evil only good,
> Where all life dies, death lives. . .

Pope imitates the effect for comic purpose in his *Essay on Criticism* (II.345-

Though the point is actually noble, it has been made more solid by not having its harmony hurried along, and, as it were, by not being brought in on rollers; but the words have for each other supports and the proppings of time-beats that result in a steady beat of greatness.

47):

> Though oft the ear the open vowels tire;
> While expletives their feeble aid do join;
> And ten low words oft creep in one dull line.

Note the effect of the adjective "low."

Single vowel sounds can have a remarkable effect on a line, both in the sound and in the power of the individual word to effect the rhythm of the whole; T. S. Eliot has justly praised Tennyson's line

> The blue fly sung in the window-pane.

Even at the cost of grammar, the poet has seen that the regular form of the past tense ("sang") would destroy the line.

**solid:** another link between these chapters and the fivefold division; the only other use of "solid" was in 8.1, where Longinus lists as the first element of sublimity a "solid thrust of conception."

**rollers. . .steady greatness:** the word for "rollers" suggests in Greek the word for "cycle." The word seems to allude to Homer's famous line (*Odyssey* 11.598), which contains a cognate verb; Sandys' translation (in Jebb's translation of the *Rhetoric* of Aristotle [Cambridge, 1909], p. 172) catches some of the effect:

> Downward anon to the valley rebounded the boulder remorseless.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Composition* 20) remarks on the way in which the arrangement of the words "rolls down together" with the rock. In the *Essay on Criticism* (II.370-73), Pope combines both this effect and that observed earlier (see note above on **sublime proportionately**):

> When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
> The line too labours, and the words move slow:
> Not so, when swift Camilla scours the plain,
> Flies o'er the unbending corn, and skims along the main.

His last line, an Alexandrine, is an imitation of his own parody just before (356-57):

> A needless Alexandrine ends the song
> That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.

"Time-beats" refers both to the quantities of the syllables and to the distance between words produced by consonantal clusters. The famous words of Milton's Christ in *Paradise Lost* (7.215-16) show this "steady beat of greatness":

> Silence, ye troubled waves, and thou Deep, peace,
> Said then th' Omnific Word, your discord end.

And, in a lower key, the closing lines of the poem:

> They hand in hand with wand'-ring steps and slow,
> Through Eden took their solitary way.

Commas are not needed to make the reader pause after "They," "hand in hand," and "steps."

## Chapter 41

# Agitated Rhythms

AND nothing makes so much for pettiness in sublime things as a perverted and agitated rhythm in speeches and writings, such as that

Longinus has throughout stressed "greatness," the obvious converse of which is "pettiness." Hence pettiness is the topic of this and the two succeeding chapters, as Longinus shows what happens to greatness when it is chopped, minced, agitated, syncopated, truncated, in both sound and sense. The chapters are both a natural part of his argument and a prelude to the great argument of the last chapter, in which dwarfed and stunted souls are contrasted with free and noble growth. Of course, Longinus is not arguing in favor of "native woodnotes wild" as opposed to an art that is "cabin'd, cribb'd, and confin'd"; his point is that nobility and freedom are obtainable only by art fully and properly understood and not abused.

The contents of this chapter and the next have no real counterparts in English; since Sir Thomas Browne, no major English prose-writer has systematically manipulated the "cadences" or "clausulae"—the closing phrases of clauses—in order to sustain a pattern of musical effect. Furthermore, because we read silently, there is little incentive for an author to work at the euphony of his style. On this score, in comparison with the ancients, we have only the most fleeting impressions of the music in prose. Even our so-called "poetic prose" and "prose-poems" do not exploit the linguistic device taken up here. The following two English passages will indicate something of the effect, although the sustained alliteration of the first would not be found in such excess in ancient literature:

a) But not for the default of unpreaching prelates, methinks I could guess what might be said for excusing them: they are so troubled with lordly living, they be so placed in palaces, couched in courts, ruffling in their rents, dancing in their dominions, pampering their paunches like a monk that maketh his jubilee, munching in their mangers, and moiling in their gay manors and mansions, and so troubled with loitering in their lordships, that they cannot attend it.

Bishop Hugh Latimer,
*Sermon on the Ploughers*

Latimer has here used as his basic meter the unit— ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ — ⏑ ; *e.g.*, "pampering their paunches" and "munching in their mangers," to which he adds the slight variations— ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ —(*e.g.*, "ruffling in their rents") and— ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ — ⏑ (*e.g.*, "loitering in their lordships").

b) And He beheld a house that was of marble, and had fair pillars of marble before it. The pillars were hung with garlands, and within and without there were torches of cedar. . .And behind her came slowly, as a hunter, a young man who wore a cloak of two colours. Now the face of the

which pyrrhics and trochees and dichorees produces, falling out finally in a dance rhythm. You see, all that is over-rhythmical appears cute and of a petty grace and most lacking in emotion, superficially popular because of its consistency; 2. and the worst of it is that just as little odes drag the audience away from the content and force their audience's attention on themselves, so those things spoken over-rhythmically present to the hearers not the emotion of the speech and writing, but the rhythm, so that since they know beforehand what cadences are coming, they keep time with those speaking—and, anticipating the beat, produce it ahead of time—as if in a

> woman was as the fair face of an idol,
> and the eyes of the young man were
> bright with lust.
>
> Oscar Wilde,
> "The Doer of the Good," from
> *The House of Pomegranates*

Here Wilde is imitating, rather pallidly and crudely, the rhythms of the King James Version of the Bible. The basic rhythm is that of the title of the piece. "Doer of the Good":— ⏑ ⏑ —. Note the phrases "marble before"; "pillars were hung"; "entered the house." The second rhythm is the same but with an extra short foot added: —⏑ ⏑—⏑ . For example, "pillars of marble," "torches of cedar," "behind her came slowly," "face of the woman," "face of an idol."

**pyrrhics and trochees and dichorees:** A pyrrhic is a metrical unit consisting of two short beats or syllables ( ⏑ ⏑ ); Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Composition* 17) says that it is neither appropriate for greatness nor impressive. The trochee consists of a long followed by a short syllable (— ⏑), which could be resolved into three shorts ( ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ ); in its resolved form it is called a "choree" or "tribrach"; Dionysius says that it is low, unimpressive, ignoble, and nothing noble can be made out of it. The last metrical unit mentioned by Longinus is "dichoree," or two "chorees"; this could be either— ⏑—⏑ , or, when resolved, ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ . If the simple "choree" was as bad as Dionysius said, the doubling of it must compound the ill.

Rhys Roberts suggests that a line quoted by Marius Victorinus, *Ars Grammatica* (3.1), gives the agitated effect in Latin:

> id agite peragite celeriter.

Tennyson produces something of the effect in *Locksley Hall* (105):

> But the jingling of the guinea
> helps the hurt that Honour feels.

A few other examples:

a) In babble and revel and wine.
Tennyson, *Maud* (22.5)

b) Is nothing but Tennyson thinly arrayed
Austin Dobson,
*The Ballad of Imitation* (19)

c) singer of Persephone
Oscar Wilde, *Theocritus* (1)

Although Joyce was deliberately striving for the effect, a few lines from *Anna Livia Plurabelle* (*Finnegans Wake,* Bk. I, ch. 8) exemplify the vice:

> Can't hear with the waters of. The
> chittering waters of. Flittering
> bats. . .Beside the rivering waters
> of, hitherandthithering waters of.

**little odes:** a diminutive in Greek; the word is used by Arrian (*Epictetus* 3.23.2) to suggest the kind of thing we call "poetic prose" and "prose-poem."

kind of chorus. 3. And similarly, what lies too close together and is syncopated into petty brief syllables also lacking in greatness and, as it were, bound together by dowels along their staccato harshness.

**beat. . .chorus:** Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1408b21) says that "the style ought not to be either in meter or without rhyme: the first lacks persuasiveness and simultaneously distracts us, for it makes us pay attention to the similarity of the cadence when it comes up again," and he compares it to a game in which children know when to chime in with the refrain.

Demetrius (15) says that public speakers who continuously used symmetrical periods waver and sway like those who are tipsy, and the audience sometimes, foreseeing the rhythmic end of the period, shouts it out before he gets there. The chorus, of course, danced as it sang; hence there would be a strong alliance of verbal and dance rhythms. Russell cites Aristides (34[50]), who says that in his day public speakers virtually sang their speeches as if they were odes; he, too, comments on the sort of rhythmic sway, like that of one drunk, produced in the courtroom by such chanting and intoning.

We have no comparable effect in English (see introductory note to this chapter), but rhymes are certainly predictable, as Pope parodies in *Essay on Criticism* (II.348-53):

> While they ring round the same unvaried chimes,
> With sure return of still expected rhymes;
> Where'er you find "the cooling western breeze,"
> In the next line, it "whispers through the trees":
> If crystal streams "with pleasing murmurs creep":
> The reader's threatened (not in vain) with "sleep."

And of course, we have learned to expect certain idioms, diction, tones of voice, and even rhythms in certain scenes and situations; in political speeches, "soap operas" and 'melodramas" we often nudge one another before a speech and say, "Here comes the old tear-jerker again."

**petty brief syllables. . .staccato harshness:** Longinus imitates the effect in his Greek. English produces a clipped staccato effect by monosyllables, whereas in Greek it is possible to use polysyllabic words. English has no comparable effect, partly because we do not have the complex simultaneity of pitch accent, stress accent, and quantitative vowels which Greek possesses. Hamlet's line (III.iv) perhaps suggests, even though monosyllabic, something of the effect:

> I'll lug the guts into the neighbor room.

And one could construct English phrases which would serve as illustrations, *e.g.*, "ecclesiastically skeletonized imbecillity." Henn (pp. 74-87) has some good passages and even a chart to convey the ideas of this and the next two chapters.

The metaphors of this closing passage are complex, for Longinus seems simultaneously to be using images drawn from building, ship-building and from medicine. The hard staccato syllables are put too close together, even in one word, and the result is like pieces of stone, hard wood, or bones chipped out and held together by dowels or mortise and tenon. A dowel is a wood peg used both in wall-building and in an-

cient ship-building to hold two stones or pieces of plank from slipping; one of its cognates signified a surgical instrument for chipping bone. Lastly, the word translated "staccato"—used only this one time in Longinus—signifies an incision made by a surgical instrument, a gouged-out area in stone, and the steps in a flight of stairs. The root of the word is the same as "syncope" and "syncopated." It has been impossible to translate the sustained double metaphor, but readers should try to keep both in mind, for Longinus moves back and forth between them, and sometimes combines them, through these chapters. Demetrius and Dionysius make extensive use of metaphors drawn from building; to this Longinus adds medical metaphors because of his concern for the organic vitality of art.

## Chapter 42

# Excessive Syncopation

AND of course excessive use of syncope in phrasing makes sublimity pettier; you see, greatness is maimed whenever it is cramped into too short a space. Now understand this to be said not of what ought to be constrained, but of what is totally constrained and cut up into bits: syncope, you see, curtails the thought, but conciseness directs it. And furthermore, it is clear that a length unsuitable to the occasions, like a corpse that is stretched out, calls up the lifeless spirits.

**syncope:** the last chapter discussed excessive syncope in words; here Longinus takes up excessive syncope in phrasing, that is, the longer units of style which express thought. As Demetrius says (44), a sudden dropping off into silence on a short clause makes the impressiveness of the speech sink into smallness, even if the thought is appropriately great, and the words, too.

**pettier:** both a medical and rhetorical term signifying the opposite of development or growth. In rhetoric, it is the equivalent of litotes, a belittling of something by understating its value.

**maimed:** the word picks up the nexus of medical metaphors. Here Longinus uses a word that suggests a defect caused either by mutilation or by birth. Such deprivation or maiming—the word also means "to castrate"—takes the manhood and life out of a work. There is no passage in the book which better illustrates Longinus' principle of criticism—sublimity—than this, for he finds that sublimity can be either enhanced or lessened even in the lowliest of syllables.

**cut up into bits:** one word in Greek, composed of eight syllables, full of letter "k," and with six of them short. It is characteristic of Longinus' wit to have a great long word both imitate the vice he is discussing and also mean "mince."

**that is stretched out. . .spirits:** the climax of Longinus' medical metaphors. As in ch. 41 he had dealt with both the excess and deficiency of choppiness in words, so here he deals with excess and deficiency in choppiness of phrase. Like the poems of Swinburne—especially those which combine mellifluous diction with excessively long lines—stretched-out language attenuates and eviscerates the soul as well as the body of the thought. The word "stretched-out" refers to a corpse laid out for death. The word "calls up" refers particularly to summoning the spirits or ghosts of the dead from the underworld. "Length" denotes "height of stature" in a human being.

Demetrius (42) quotes a line of Greek prose consisting of eight long syllables in a row as exceeding the measure of prose: Roberts translates it "This land, our land, reached now by me," which catches some of the effect. Dionysius (ch. 17) quotes some lines from Euri-

pides' *Hecuba* (163-64) which have sixteen long syllables in a row—but here, of course, the device works, since poetry allows such excess.

For an example of a felicitous combining of long and short syllables, see Hamlet's speech to the players (III.ii):

> Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue. But if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines.

## Chapter 43

# Petty Diction

AND pettiness of words is powerful at shaming greatness. Now, though the winter storm in Herodotus is in all its points described in dae-

As Russell observes, since in both practice and theory some words lend dignity and distinction, it follows that some words will produce the opposite effect. The word "proper" in Swift's famous definition of style—"proper words in proper places"—implies the same criterion, one which dominated antiquity, the Renaissance, the eighteenth century, and the Victorian period. It really lies behind the present fashion for obscenity in diction, for those who urge the use of such language argue that it is proper, *i.e.*, aesthetically fitting for their subject matter. Granted their subject matter, they are of course right—though one may legitimately question whether the subject matter itself is as worthy of rational attention as the subjects, actions, and emotions which Longinus—and the consensus of cultures—have adjudged to represent the higher elements of man. Hume—to pick a critic not ordinarily grouped with the more rhapsodic upholders of "the dignity of man," like Longinus or Pico—after a judicious assessment of the two schools of thought on man's worth, concludes, "To love the glory of virtuous deeds is a sure proof of the love of virtue" (Essay XI, *Of the Dignity and Meanness of Human Nature*).

How ingrained was the decorum of diction in the Renaissance can be seen most amusingly in Polonius. When he reads Hamlet's letter, written to Ophelia, to the King and Queen, he interrupts his reading of the words "most beautified Ophelia" to remark (II.ii), "That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase, 'beautified' is a vile phrase." And out of the player king's turgid speech (II.ii)—which Polonius properly thinks "too long"—he selects one good phrase, "mobled queen." In both instances he is right.

Longinus, with his Platonic emphasis on the aspiring mind of man, would not find sublimity in obscenity or coprophilia, although he sanctions "low" language under the pressure of "intense necessity." He has preferences, but they are not so inflexible as those of the neoclassic critics and authors. Instead, he seems to adopt the sensible standard of Dionysius of Halicarnassus (quoted in ch. 40, n. on **Heracles says**). Russell notes that, for the ancients, genre was important: words suited to tragedy were not suited for a forensic speech; words appropriate to a dialogue might not be permissible in history. We make an analogous distinction in our phrase "levels of diction" or "levels of discourse." Earlier views—say in the nineteenth century—that only certain words were "poetic" no longer appeal to us, but only because we have enlarged the range of poetic subject matter, not because we differ with the notion of appropriateness. When T. S. Eliot or Ezra Pound juxtaposes words from dif-

monic fashion, (heaven knows) it has some things which do not measure up to the repute of the subject matter; this is perhaps true in the phrase "the sea sizzled", where "sizzled" draws away much of the sublimity because of its cacophonousness; but "the wind," he says "got tired" and those thrown

ferent "levels of diction" to produce a shock, the shock will be felt only if the reader recognizes and respects the existence of such "levels."

For citations of ancient texts on this topic, see Russell's introductory note to ch. 40. Aristotle puts his finger on the problem with his usual acumen (*Poetics* 1458a18 ff.): lucidity is the principal aim of good prose; the most lucid words are those of ordinary speech; but these words are low. Russell cites a most amusing passage from Velleius Paterculus (2.41), who "steeled himself for his task" of saying that Caesar, when captured by the pirates, never took off his shoes or undressed, with these words: "Why should details be omitted simply because they cannot be told in presentable language?"

**in Herodotus:** the passage from Herodotus extends over several chapters in Books VII-VIII: Longinus cites specifically from 7.188, 7.191, and 8.13.

**"sizzled". . .cacophonousness:** we have borrowed the felicitous translation "sizzle" from Grube. It is, however, overtranslated, for the Greek verb literally means "boil" and "seethe," English words not cacophonous enough.

As Russell observes, ancient critics were highly conscious of sibilants; Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Composition* 14) says that "s" is a graceless and unpleasing sound, and painful when occurring often, hissing sibilance being more suited to a wild beast than to a rational human being. Pindar (fr. 61, Bowra; 79, Schroeder) says that "s" began to be frequent with dithyrambic poetry. In English, Tennyson was especially careful not to allow one word to end with an "s" and the next word to begin with one. Milton is fond of conglomerating the letter when describing the devils, *e.g.*, in Bk. I of *Paradise Lost:* "Ahaz his sottish conqueror" (472); "Osiris, Isis, Orus and their train" (478); and "Azazel as his right" (534, cited by William Smith in his eighteenth century translation). In Bk. X, the sibilants assimilate with the serpentine metamorphosis into "A dismal universal hiss, the sound/Of public scorn" (508-09).

Longinus objects here to both the lowness of the term and its ugliness; we have used "cacophonousness" rather than the more normal English "cacophony" to enhance this sense. Literally, the word translated "cacophonousness" is "vicious-mouthed"; the prefix "caco-" is a transliteration of the Greek.

**"got tired":** we have borrowed Einerson's translation, resisting a desire to use "pooped out." Dorsch's "fagged" is good but more British than American. A splendid example of such failure in diction appears in *Narcissus,* by an anonymous playwright of the early seventeenth century:

> O do not stay a moment nor a minute,
> 'Love is a puddle, and I am o'er shoes in it.'

The lines are quoted by W. W. Greg, *Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama* (London, 1906), p. 377.

Russell remarks that for Longinus to

up by the sea onto the wreckage received "an ungraceful end." The verb "got tired," you see, is by its colloquial nature unimpressive, and "ungraceful" is not at home with so much emotion. 2. Similarly, Theopompus, having described the descent of the Persian on Egypt in a way beyond nature, split up the whole thing by some little words:

> What city or what people in Asia did not send envoys to the King? What creation of earth or what perfection of art, fine and precious, was not conveyed to him as a gift? Were there not many extravagant carpets and cloaks—some purple, some intricate, some white—and many golden pavilions prepared with all manner of useful things, and many robes and extravagant divans? And further, both silver plates and vessels worked in gold, and cups and bowls, some of which you are to understand were studded with gems, and others wrought with extravagant precision. And in addition countless tens of thousands of weapons, some Greek, some barbarian, and pack animals transcendent in their multitude, and sacrificial animals fattened for slaughter, and many ephas of condiments and many grain-sacks and burlap

object to Herodotus' litotes—"an ungraceful end"—is "a little odd. . .One might have expected more appreciation of this kind of heroic if macabre understatement, natural to many courageous races and generations." It is not, however, the litotes to which Longinus objects, but the word "grace": for Longinus, the word "grace" suggests the delicacy of expression characteristic of Lysias and Hyperides (34.2; see also 1.4).

**emotion:** the word here is perilously close—or so we might expect—to "emotional experience," but Longinus is not thinking so much of the human suffering as of the emotional quality which Herodotus sought to convey.

**Theopompus:** see ch. 31 for this historian. The passage quoted here seems to confirm the judgment of Isocrates, that of his two "star" pupils, Ephorus needed to be spurred on, Theopompus needed to be curbed.

Dio Chrysostom (*Discourse* 18.10), writing in the same century—as is probable—as Longinus, says of Theopompus that Thucydides is among the highest of historians, Theopompus in the second class. Dio gives his reasons for the lower classification of Theopompus as (a) his rhetorical quality even in narration and (b) the laziness of his diction. These are the qualities noted with examples here by Longinus, although for Longinus the faulty diction is a vice, the rhetorical quality of the narrative a virtue. Even Dio concedes the power of Theopompus.

**the Persian. . .whole:** Longinus uses

bags, and blank books of papyrus and all other useful things: and so much preserved flesh of sacrificial animals as to make heaps so large that those approaching them from afar took them to be mounds and hills thrust in front of them.

3. He runs away from what is more sublime to what is too low, when he ought instead to have made a development; but by mixing into his wonderful account of the whole preparation things like grain-sacks and condiments and burlap bags, he has made it into a kind of image of a butcher's shop. You see, just as if someone brought between these ornate facades golden and gem-encrusted bowls and silver plate and solid gold pavilions and cups and set them down with grain-sacks and burlap bags it would be inappropriate to the sight, so, too, such words are a shame to the structure of the sentence, and, arranged at the wrong time, appear, as it were, like tattoo-marks. 4. It lay before him to describe as a whole the succession of items and those mounds of which he speaks as having been thrown together, by changing his account of the other preparations thus—to say something about "camels and a multitude of pack animals bearing as freight all the production expenses of a luxurious enjoyment at table;" or to

the poetic singular for "Persians," and—just to emphasize the rhetorical joke—puts the word "whole" into a poetic plural, a Greek idiom not translatable in English idiom.

**ornate facades:** the word—not a common one in Greek—signifies a showy facade (*e.g.*, Diogenes Laertius 6.72). Longinus seems to be referring partly to the Potemkin Village of the Persian armament and ornament, partly to the two parts of Theopompus' description, which starts and finishes with the appropriate "show" but ruins the effect of the stage-setting by depositing grain-sacks and burlap bags in the middle.

**tattoo marks:** the Greek word (*stigma*) has this initial and continuous meaning, although it can be used in a more general sense, *i.e.*, "blemish" or "spot." But the root strongly indicates a puncture of some kind, as in the stigmata of Jesus. We have chosen this strong translation partly because the lexicons justify it, partly because it suggests better than any other the horror which Longinus feels: given his admiration of the human body, tattoo-marks would be a gross disfiguring.

Herodotus (5.35) tells the story of a slave whose head was shaven and tattooed with a message; and in 7.35 he relates that Xerxes not only lashed the Hellespont but even brought in "tattooers" to "brand" the recalcitrant waters. The word signifies a permanent disfiguration produced by a heated intrument.

**production expenses:** the word is strongly associated, by etymology and usage, with expenses for putting on a tragedy,

word it "heaps of all kinds of grains, all those which make a difference in cookery and culinary pleasure;" or, if he wished to make the list entire in itself, to say "and as many seasonings as belong to chef and caterer." 5. In matters of sublimity, one ought not to confront directly what is solid and overly contumelious, unless we are harried into it by a kind of intense necessity; but it would be fitting to make our voice worthy of the things discussed and to imitate nature, the artist of humanity, she who neither set our unspeakable parts before our faces nor the drainages of our distentions, but hid them away as well as she could and—according to Xenophon—hid their channels as far away as possible, in no way shaming the fineness of the the whole living being. 6. But, as you see, it is not urgent to enumerate every species of thing that produces pettiness; it is clear that the opposites of the things which we showed before make speeches and writings sublime

*i.e.*, "production expenses for a chorus"; combined with "ornate facades," it certainly seems to suggest a theatrical effect.

**heaps:** Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Composition* 21, *ad. fin.*) says that this is a very "vague and general term." When dealing with "low" items, Longinus is saying, it is better to heap them all together in some general way.

**one ought not to confront directly:** Longinus does not seem to object to the monstrous hyperbole in Theopompus' pictured hills of meat moving across the countryside on their way "down-country." Persian armaments were notoriously huge: see Aeschylus' *Persians* and the hyperbole, praised in ch. 38, where the Greeks are literally buried under the enormous quantity of Persian missiles.

**intense necessity:** Longinus' criterion for sanctioning vulgar language. So Philip is admired for his ability to "stomach patiently" things "dirty and shameful," *i.e.*, it was intensely necessary to do so.

**imitate nature:** the most famous expressions of the doctrine to be found in English are in Shakespeare—Hamlet's advice to the players, in which he says, "hold the mirror up to nature"—and Pope: "first follow nature. . . ." For a contemporary discussion of the matter, see M. L. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1971). For the ancient doctrine of mimesis, see ch. 13, n. on **mimesis and emulation.**

**drainages of our distentions:** the periphrasis is genteel and illustrates Longinus' point, as does "hid their channels"; but it is also preparation for a rhetorical joke (see below, n. on **disfiguring**). Compare the Spenserian passage on the same subject, quoted in ch. 32, n. on **in Xenophon**, where Xenophon's allegorical periphrasis is also cited.

**Xenophon. . .as far as possible:** from the *Memorabilia* 1.4.8. Russell observes, "In Greek thought the creator is not omnipotent; he does the best he can with the [material]," a Platonic notion.

and noble are what, for the most part, will make them low and disfiguring.

**disfiguring:** the word is a pun on the root "figure," the rhetorical term which consumes the bulk of the extant text of Longinus and in which periphrasis is included. The joke which Longinus set up in his periphrasis for excrement ("drainages of our distentions," above) and which he continued in his phrase "intimated demonstratively" now comes to a head. By not using a figure, *i.e.*, a periphrasis, for what is dirty and disgusting, an author makes himself "disfigured."

## Chapter 44

# The Decline of Sublimity

SINCE you are engaged in useful learning, my dearest Terentianus, I shall not hestitate to occult this question which is left, a question for

Chapter 44 is the peroration of Longinus' speech. Aristotle discusses peroration in the closing pages of his *Rhetoric* (1419b10 ff.). He lists as its four aims 1) disposing the reader favorably towards oneself and against one's adversary; 2) development and lowering the opposition's view; 3) arousing certain emotions in the audience; 4) recapitulation. Among the emotions which he specifies are pity, indignation, hatred, emulation, and a sense of striving. All of these four points appear in the last chapter of Longinus.

Both Nicolas the Sophist and the author of an anonymous work on rhetoric (Spengel I.450-453) say that the peroration embraces an *athroismos* (see ch. 23) of subject, character, and emotion. The anonymous handbook also divides peroration into two kinds: the pragmatic—the aim of which is recapitulation—and the emotional; an emotional peroration has two aims: to set up the emotions of those who hear it and to strengthen the speech. Cassius Longinus (Spengel I.304) says that the peroration is an antistrophe to the introduction, that it is protreptic to the voters, and that it consists of reminders of what has preceded and development. Longinus observes each of these functions. Apsines, in his *Technique of Rhetoric* (Spengel I.366-67), says that perorations can be accomplished, among many ways discussed, by means of characterization and question-and-answer. Longinus uses both in his device of a dialogue conducted between a philosopher and himself. The device is characteristic of his method for recapitulating his "demonstration" of "proofs": he does not re-analyze or summarize the figures, for example, but instead utilizes them in his own rhetoric, which exemplifies what Dionysius of Halicarnassus speaks of in his letter to Pompeius (chs. 1 and 6): "philosophic rhetoric."

For details of how Longinus manages his peroration, see both the Introduction and the notes that follow.

**useful learning:** in ch. 2, Longinus had said that even those parts of speeches and writings which came only from nature could be understood only by technique, and that had those who had disesteemed sincere students reasoned this out, they would not have considered theory of technique excessive and useless. Here in ch. 44, he counts Terentianus as just such a sincere student, for whose sake he is going to clear up a popular but erroneous view on the decline of oratory in order to express the true view.

**occult:** an astronomical term sufficiently common in Greek to require no mollifier. In ch. 32.2, where the word was used earlier, Longinus said that the

which one of the philosophers recently sought elucidation, saying: "Wonder holds me, as no doubt many others, how it is that though in our age there are natures which are highly persuasive and political, insightful and apt, and most fertile in producing pleasing touches in speeches and writings, yet there no longer come to be—except rather rarely—men who are sublime and transcendentally great. So universal is the infertility which has hold over our life. 2. Or, heaven knows, must we believe that assertion

animus of Demosthenes against the traitors "occulted"—*i.e.*, eclipsed, hid, and intercepted—the multiplicity of his metaphors. Such occultation is, for Longinus, a necessary part of great art; as he remarks in ch. 17, ". . .a figure is most excellent when the fact that it is a figure thoroughly escapes our notice." The verb "occult" is a warning to the reader to read deeply—especially the myth, which Russell describes merely as "a genealogical fantasy (that is all it is)." ["Occult," the word of the manuscript, we accept as the reading. See Appendix A.]

Every major theme in *On the Sublime* is given its due place in the peroration, although Longinus does not here adopt the bald and mechanical enumeration which he had used in the *partitio* of his exposition (8.1). There, of course, the virtues of enumeration are obvious: as Fortunatianus says (Halm, pp. 113-114), when the subject is long and obscure, a *partitio* is necessary, and it should be enumerated in brief.

**left:** the word "left" in Longinus indicates a part of the whole, qualitatively different but still a part of the whole. Therefore those who regard ch. 44 as an "appendix" (*e.g.*, Russell and Segal), even though they recognize its close connection with the rest of the work, err in terminology. Ch. 44 is, as we have said above, the "peroration."

**philosophers:** as Russell says, "Since the views expressed equate the principate with slavery, we naturally think of the association of certain Stoic groups in the first century with opposition to the principate." A few lines later (44.2), the philosopher uses the word "democracy," probably as a reference to the Roman Republic, especially in the years before the principate, when Cicero and Caesar and Hortensius and other great orators flourished. Russell's note lists modern sources for the problem; the *locus classicus* is Tacitus' *Dialogue on the Orators.*

Longinus will play on many phrases used by the philosopher in his own answering speech.

**infertility:** in the first clause of this sentence, the philosopher had said that there were many natures "fertile in pleasing touches"; here he says that there is an "infertility" of great speakers. "Dearth" is the usual translation. Behind the words "universal infertility" lies perhaps the Platonic and Stoic explanation for cultural decline, a topos which extends from the birth of Cicero (106 B.C.) to the death of Dio Chrysostom (*ca.* 113 A.D.), see our monograph *The Dating of Longinus,* pp. 5-10 and 44-53.

The philosopher's list of good oratorical traits is depressing: credibility, smartness, pleasing touches. He is des-

being bruited about, that democracy is a good nurse of great men, in which alone do those powerful in speeches and writings both reach their acme and die? That assertion says, you see, that freedom is sufficient to nourish the sensibilities of those who are great in mind and to raise their expectations, and at the same time to excite both an animated zeal for striving with each other and a love of esteem for first prizes. 3. Besides, because of the awards available in their polities, the superiorities of the souls of public speakers are on every occasion professionally exercised and polished and, in the freedom of their practice, bedazzle their audience. But nowadays," he said,

cribing a Hyperides, not a Demosthenes; a Dryden, not a Shakespeare.

**Or, heaven knows. . .being bruited about:** the word "or" is disjunctive and indicates that the philosopher is shifting his point of view; the words "must we believe," coupled with the oath "heaven knows," indicate that it is a point of view with which he disagrees. His own theory, just briefly hinted at in the previous sentence, in the phrase "universal infertility" would, presumably, have developed along Stoic lines, had he ever got around to developing it. Instead, however, in taking up the alternative theory—that the loss of political freedom is the cause of cultural decline—he becomes so enamored of the other notion that he develops it at length, and shows no sign of stopping until Longinus finally interrupts him in 44.6. Although he is called a philosopher, we must not assume that he was sharply distinct from a sophist or a rhetorician: the words were almost interchangeable in antiquity. By using the name "philosopher" of him rather than "sophist," Longinus is amplifying his stature, only to cut him down.

The phrase "being bruited about" originally signified a confused babble. Later the word refers to what is common knowledge, common talk, our English phrases "being noised about," "bruited about"—the sort of "cocktail party" philosophy which Sir Thomas Browne would classify as a "vulgar error."

The popular argument presented by the philosopher is based on external rather than internal causes: it assumes that a different form of government will produce a climate favorable to oratory. Such a view is a direct denial of man's nature, which responds, even in ages of cultural decline, to the greatness of external nature—to volcanoes and oceans—as well as to the greatness of earlier cultural periods. No combination of nature and technique is needed to respond to a volcano; but to appreciate Homer or Demosthenes both are required. So Longinus argues. Since even the philosopher has the ability to appreciate the fact that earlier writers and speakers were superior in greatness, his very concern for the problem confirms Longinus' point. "Freedom" was as much a cant word in the first century as it is in our own day. For a full discussion of freedom in first century Rome, see Chaim Wirszubski, *LIBERTAS as a Political Idea at Rome During the Late Republic and Early Principate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

On the question of whether Philo could be the source for the philosopher, see Appendix C.

"we are likely to learn from childhood to live under a justified slavery, with our own still tender sensibilities just out of the swaddling clothes of its customs and behavior, and we lack the taste of that finest stream of speeches and writings and the one most able to breed them—I speak of freedom," he said, "for this is why we emerge as great in nothing except flattery." 4. Be-

**a justified slavery:** we have followed Russell's interpretation here. The word we have translated "justified" is usually translated "just," *i.e.*, "justly exercised," but in its adverbial form means "with reason, with good cause." If we translate "just," we must assume an irony in the philosopher which the rest of his diatribe does not justify. In 44.10, Longinus shows that he takes the philosopher's word for the sense "justified"; he is undoubtedly playing ironically with the two senses of the word.

Perhaps the word-play may be used to help date the work: even in the latter part of the first century A.D., the legitimacy of the principate was still a lingering issue; it is hard to believe that in the third century A.D. men in Rome were still seriously doubting it—although if the author be Cassius Longinus, who participated in a rebellion against Rome, such a sentiment would be appropriate. *Grammatici certant. . .*

**swaddling-clothes:** the image of "swaddling-clothes" appears in a passage of Philo, the sentiment of which is apposite enough to have caused several scholars to see a close connection between Philo and Longinus, and one scholar (Rostagni) has even identified them (see Appendix C).

Romans, at least of the first century A.D., seem—like modern Russians—virtually to have bound their babies in swaddling-clothes: see Pliny the Elder (*Natural History* 7.1.3), where he paints an ironically pathetic picture of man, the future ruler of earth, put into *vincula* as no domestic animal is, with hands and feet tied down.

**stream:** Longinus used the image earlier, when he said (13.3) that Plato channelled off some of his greatness from "the Homeric stream." The image is drawn from Plato himself as well (*Timaeus* 75E): "The stream of speeches . . .the finest and best of streams."

**abilities we have:** one word in Greek, signifying a permanent condition or habit, either of body or mind; it may be present by nature or by training. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Composition* 25) uses the word several times in his assessment of Demosthenes; he compares his mastery of rhetoric to the mastery of a great flautist, whose hands might not have been able to reproduce complicated passages at first, but could later after long training and custom had made such mastery second nature. So Demosthenes, after years of training, had such an ability.

When Longinus uses this word he is preparing for the finale of his peroration, in which he will return to the opening chapter. There he had said that a good speech had to be useful, and usefulness, he said, consisted of two things: first, defining what sublimity was; second, showing how and by what means it might be obtained. He has in the previous chapters given a formal definition, which he then developed both by an analysis of the five sources

cause of this he used to say that though the other abilities we have arise even in household servants, no slave ever comes to be a public speaker: the lack of free speech, you see, boils up in him, and, as it were, guards the one who has been battered over and over again by habitual mistreatment: [5.] "the day of slavery," according to Homer, "robs us of half our excellence." "Now," he says, "if what I hear may be believed, just as the cages in which Pygmies—but only the ones called *nani*—are reared not only restrict the development of those they enclose but also crush them because of the bond that lies around their mouths, so one might explain that every kind of slavery, even if it should be most justified, is a cage of the soul and a

and by examples. But since sublimity is a characteristic of the soul, and since both the philosopher and he agree that men in their day seemed to lack this characteristic, it is necessary for Longinus to show how it may be re-acquired.

**no slave. . .public speaker:** slaves often reached positions of power and prestige in antiquity as doctors, musicians, literary critics, and even philosophers. The slave Epictetus, for example, no less than the emperor Marcus Aurelius, was a great Stoic. In the imperial bureaucracy from Augustus on both slaves and freedmen were very powerful. But there is no record of any slave who became active in law or politics (*i.e.*, rhetoric). Russell cites modern sources dealing with the question.

Since it is a philosopher speaking, and one who seems to represent the Stoic arguments used by the supporters of a republic throughout the principate (*e.g.*, Brutus and Helvidius Priscus), we are probably intended to remember certain of the Stoic paradoxes: only the wise man is free and only the wise man is a public speaker. Throughout his discussion of cultural decline, the philosopher is forgetful of such specific Stoic maxims and also of the general Stoic aim of being unemotional.

**according to Homer:** from the *Odyssey* (18.322). These are lines spoken by the swineherd slave, Eumaeus, to the disguised Odysseus, whose old dog has just seen his master and died. Eumaeus says that no one has bothered to care for the beast:

> You know how servants are: without a master
> they have no will to labor, or excel.
> For Zeus who views the wide world takes away
> half the manhood of a man, that day
> he goes into captivity and slavery.
> (Tr. Robert Fitzgerald)

**Pygmies. . .*nani*:** the philosopher suggests that he is using "Pygmies" as a generic term, *nani* as a species, a dwarf. Although the distinction was not always observed in antiquity, it did exist. Aristotle (*Problems* 892a) asks why it is that some *nani* are born small, others large. Dwarves, he says, are produced in two ways: by narrow spaces or by deprivation of food. When narrow space operates, Aristotle says, the creatures produced are called Pygmies. Space, of course, does not refer to artificial cages or quarters that cramp and confine, but rather to the womb of the mother, a

common prisonhouse." 6. I of course took him up and answered him: "Finding fault with the present over and over again, my best of friends, is

confinement by nature. This point he makes clear in the *Generation of Animals* (749a4): Pygmies, he says there, are "maimed or defective in their parts and in their size during gestation." Such creatures are, however, proportioned like their parents. Tradition made the Pygmies a race of "little men" who engaged in a war with the cranes, a war which was alluded to by Homer (*Il.* 3.6).

**I. . .answered him:** it is part of Longinus' art that his philosopher, whom he will now answer, is a symbolic amalgam of all the philosophic sects current in the period: Stoic, Epicurean, Peripatetic, and even Cynic. Longinus wishes to set his own Platonic and aesthetic philosophy against all the contemporary explanations, in order to show the timelessness of his own theory as distinct from the historicism which infects the others.

The philosopher—true to the form of first century rhetorical *philosophers*—is warming up to his theme, cast in the form of a diatribe. He has made his main point, that the cause of cultural decline is political in nature, and is now beginning to develop and amplify it with illustrations and images, the first of which is an elaborate and far-fetched conceit: the cultural environment of the day is to the mind as cages are to the bodies of dwarfed pygmies. As a witty sign of his various games, Longinus even puts the word "development" into the mouth of the philosopher just at the point when he begins his rhetorical "development." The philosopher reveals his rhetorical and "inorganic" education in his phrase "if what I hear may be believed," for his knowledge is based on secondary sources. Longinus will outdo him in fanciful conceits in the speech that follows, but his imagery there is drawn from nature, not from books and from the curious and perverted customs of a decadent stage. If the philosopher be a living proof of his own theory, Longinus (his contemporary) is a living disproof.

Of course, the philosopher's speech is not simply parody and mockery; it has its own rhetorical pulse and power, but its total effect is Ovidian and even conventional. His argument is not wrong; it is superficial. He does not touch on the deeper causes, the moral and internal ones. Longinus had, apparently, expected him to do so, but as soon as the philosopher showed that he was going to be rhetorical and epideictic rather than philosophical, by resorting to development and amplification rather than probing deeper, Longinus interrupts.

**Finding fault:** Longinus here censures the philosopher just as he would censure any thinker of any age who thought that local and temporal circumstances affected human nature in an essential manner. The "battle of the ancients and the moderns" existed in antiquity; by the striking but "metaphysical" analogy of the pygmies, the philosopher has revealed that he is shifting his original inquiry to this jejune and trivial theme, and Longinus wants none of it. He was well aware of that "human malignity" (Tacitus, *Dialogus* 18.3) which always praised the past and belittled the present, for he himself had commented on it (33.3). For Longinus, the great men of the past presented models to be imitated

easy and a peculiarity of human beings; but see whether it is not the peace of the world that corrupts great natures—but much rather this unlimited war

and emulated, not sticks to belabor the present, not pretexts for ornate lamentations on the decline of culture. His initial censure of the philosopher comes just here, and does not start by contradicting the philosopher's theory of the reasons for cultural decline.

For a modern statement of "human malignity," compare Thoreau (*Walden* ch. "What I lived for"):

> Men esteem truth remote, in the outskirts of the system, behind the farthest star, before Adam and after the last man. In eternity there is indeed something true and sublime. But all these times and places and occasions are now and here. God himself culminates in the present moment, and will never be more divine in the lapse of all the ages. And we are enabled to apprehend at all what is sublime and noble only by the perpetual instilling and drenching of the reality which surrounds us. The universe constantly and obediently answers to our conceptions; whether we travel fast or slow, the track is laid for us. Let us spend our lives in conceiving then. The poet or the artist never yet had so fair and noble a design but some of his posterity at least could accomplish it.

**the peace of the world. . .corrupts great natures:** Juvenal (*Satires* 6.292) had touched on this notion in his famous phrase "the evils of a long peace." So, too, in the *Dialogus* (38.2) Tacitus has Maternus comment on how

> the long quiet of the times, and the continuous ease of the people, and the perpetual tranquility of the senate, and especially the disciplines of the emperor have *pacified* eloquence just as they have everything else. (Italics ours)

Our own day has no appreciation of this beneficial vice, but we can reconstruct the feeling from what we know of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods. In the *Dialogus,* Tacitus has Maternus defend the long peace, even if it was purchased at the cost of great oratory: the republic was tormented with continually new legislation, with midnight meetings of the magistrates under crisis, with charges and countercharges and feuds, with factions and class warfare (36); great eloquence is the offspring of license, not of freedom, for licentious freedom is the comrade of sedition, an incitement to lawless protest (40). True, Maternus admits, we do not know of any Spartan or Cretan orators; but then they were well regulated states. The Gracchi, he says, were eloquent, and so was Cicero, but at what a price!

This is Longinus' first correction of the philosopher's theory: he substitutes "peace" for "freedom,"and in the two words sums up the whole argument of Tacitus' *Dialogus,* which (for Longinus) would have been too historical and political and hence superficial. The *pax romana* was a better term for describing the Roman empire than "tyranny," which is what the philosopher meant by his word "freedom." Longinus was under no illusion about the values of peace; like Maternus, he knew the answer to the question (*Dialogus* 37.7), "Who does not know that it is better and more useful to enjoy peace than to be vexed by war?" But he would have

which holds in occupation our cravings and, in addition, (heaven knows) our emotions, which stand guard over our lives nowadays and drive and carry them off to their heights. The love of material things (of which we are all now insatiably sick) and the love of pleasure drive us into slavery—rather (as one might say), they plunge us—men, lives, and all—down into an

denied the conclusion of Maternus, that war breeds better and loftier combatants than peace, and that "the condition of oratory is similar" (37.8). War is the physical form of anti-*logos:* Longinus used "war" as his image for this in his second explanation of the cause for cultural decline.

**much rather:** Longinus here qualitatively shifts the basis of discussion from the external to the internal. It is that "huge army of the world's desires" which corrupts *logos.* The peace of the *pax romana* was purely external; the war of desires raged fiercer because of it.

**insatiably sick:** a powerful oxymoron which achieves its effect by the double sense of "sick"; this word is also used of emotion, especially the emotion of love, "a womanish desire." Although Longinus uses much medical imagery, this is his first use of the word "be sick," which he has reserved for the culmination of his medical metaphors.

**love of pleasure:** this word and its associated vices, love of material things and love of money, are used only in this chapter. They are all opposed to the philosopher's misuse of "love of esteem." In 44.2, the philosopher praised the "good old days" of democracies and republics, when love of esteem and ambition led to greatness in oratory. Longinus is asserting in his nexus of substitute "loves," that love of esteem will still produce greatness; his point is that man has substituted a love of praise for a love of esteem. Love of esteem may lead to failure because of bad technique and judgment, but it is always a virtue. At the root of the word lies the concept of *esteem* (in Greek *time*); for Longinus the true "timocracy" will be what John Adams called an "aristocracy of the intellect," and not the timocracy censured by Plato (who seems to have coined the word in *Republic* 545B), where men "desire material things" (548A).

Love of money is famous as the root of all evils (I Timothy 6:10). It is used as a synonym for "love of material things," a word which appears in Plato (*Republic* 391B-C) in a passage strongly reminiscent of Longinus:

> Achilles, although the son of a goddess and Peleus, a man most wise. . .and although reared by the most wise Chiron, was so full of perturbation that he had within him two *sicknesses* opposite to each other. . .*an illiberal love of material things* and a *contempt for gods and men.*
> (Italics ours)

Longinus will take up the "contempt for gods" in 44.8.

**drive us into slavery:** just as Longinus had offered a political explanation superior to that offered by the philosopher and then replaced it with a "much better" moral explanation, so now he takes up the philosopher's slave-image, amplified by the conceit of

abyss: though love of money is a disease that makes for pettiness, love of pleasure is one which makes men most ignoble. 7. Indeed, I am not able to discover by reasoning how those of us who over-esteem limitless wealth and

the pygmies, only to replace it with an image superior in truth, if not in ingenuity, to the pygmy-image. He had marked the earlier one by the phrase "much rather"; of this he says simply "rather."

**disease that makes for pettiness. . .most ignoble:** the two vices—love of material things and love of pleasure—are allied but distinct. The first makes man "unfree," illiberal, as Plato had said (see n. on **love of pleasure** above); those who strive for wealth as an end in itself lack that expert knowledge of generosity which the liberal man has (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1122a34).

The epithet "making for pettiness" is also a grim joke; first, it takes up the philosopher's picture of breeding dwarves, of literally making men little, petit, petty. Second, it links together, in a kind of climax, the sequence of chapters immediately preceding: 41-43. All three deal with similar material—the things that destroy sublimity; all three contain the word "make petty." In fact, the first chapter in the sequence (41) opens with the word "make petty"; the last chapter (43) contains the word in its last sentence. And in the first line of the intervening chapter it appears in the comparative (42.1). Ch. 41 discusses rhythms that are broken, short, effeminate, cute; ch. 42 discusses *syncope*—a cramping, confining, compressing, deadening device; ch. 43 discusses low, shameful pettiness of diction. The verb "make petty" was the word used by Aristotle to signify the process of breeding dwarves, and dwarves are the basis for the philosopher's conceit. Among the reasons that make Longinus interrupt the philosopher is his loathing for such human mannikins, of man *manqué*.

Pettiness and slavery: Longinus conjoined the two words as early as ch. 9.3, where he began to discuss the five elements that make for greatness and sublimity. It is a sentence which contains many of the key words used here in ch. 44:

> the true public speaker ought to have a sensibility neither *low* nor *ignoble*. You see, those whose sense of things and *behavior* in the *whole of life* are *petty* and appropriate to a *slave* are not the sort who would bring out something *wonderful* and *worthy of the ages*. . .

So pettiness and slavery are the burden of his interruption of the philosopher, just as they have been the burden of the preceding three chapters, for the pettiness of diction and rhythm make the public speaker who descends to it a slave. Here in ch. 44 Longinus says that the love of money makes a man petty; the love of pleasure (and hence of "pleasing touches") makes a man ignoble. Both are seen as diseases that cripple and dwarf man's nature.

Russell observes that Longinus' terminology is technically exact in accordance with Stoic philosophy (Longinus is reading the Stoic philosopher a lesson from his own book): love of money is a disease, love of pleasure a diseased weakness.

**over-esteem:** the word picks up "love of

(to say it more truly) make it into a divinity can avoid admitting into our souls the vices that naturally follow it. Extravagance, you see, accompanies immoderate and uncurtailed wealth, holding onto it and (as they say) keeping step with it, and when wealth opens the way into cities and houses, extravagance comes in at the same time and sets up house together with him. And when they have stayed for a time, they hatch younglings in our lives (according to the wise), and swiftly begetting offspring, they breed vanity and luxury—not as bastards, but as very legitimate offspring. And if anyone should allow offspring bred of this wealth to come to maturity, they swiftly implant inexorable despots in our souls—contumely and lawless-

esteem" and plays on its root, which means "estimation," with its attendant notion of setting a price. The only "inspiration" that hedonistic money-grubbers have is to neglect what is deathless (44.8) and to raise themselves to a kind of divinity. Of course, they delude themselves, like those guilty of *parenthyrson* (3.5), with "empty emotion" as they try to make what is even beneath their own "bloated parts" into a god.

**Extravagance:** the word appeared three times in the passage quoted from Theopompus in the previous chapter—a description of the luxurious and corrupt Persian armament: extravagant carpets, extravagant divans, and extravagantly worked cups and chalices. One suspects that the passage from Theopompus was "staged" there deliberately. The West has always used the "pomp of the Persian" and East as symbols for decadence. Juvenal, for example, throughout the satires attacks Rome for succumbing to this barbaric concern for luxurious living; and Longinus is remarkably close to Juvenal in his moral analysis of Rome's cultural decline. As usual, his quotations work for him in many ways.

The word "extravagance" corresponds to "love of pleasure" as wealth corresponds to "love of money."

**according to the wise:** Plato (*Republic* 573C-E) traces the corruption of the tyrannic man in similar imagery: he becomes drunk with erotic love and melancholy, takes to indulging in feasts and revels, and Eros enters his house and governs his soul; the cravings put forth their shoots and sprout their wings and hatch, and the result is delusion. Both the Platonic passage and Longinus' myth are ways of figuring the familiar Greek nexus: satiety, *hybris*, and delusion.

**bastards:** the same analogy was used in 39.3. There Longinus had said that musical notes were the bastard offspring of persuasion, not the legitimate ones, which were words, the true "workings of human nature." Only by *logos*, Longinus said, could men truly "rear up" their souls to communion with greatness.

**inexorable despots:** "inexorable" is literal: they cannot be prayed to, like Achilles in Bk. 9 of the *Iliad*, for he has become a tyrant and a despot and he is compared to death. The true despots and tyrants of men are the internal cravings and their brood of vices, not the Roman emperor. Such, of course, is the

ness and shameless impudence. 8. Thus it is necessary for these things to happen and for humanity no longer to gaze up openly at the cosmos nor for there to be any speech and writing made for later fame, but it is necessary for such vices little by little to accomplish their end in the cycle of corruption in

main line of Greek philosophical thought: Plato in the *Republic* and Aristotle in his sequence of *Ethics* and *Politics*. The philosopher had argued that if the emperor could be replaced by a democracy, sublimity would return to speech; Longinus answers him by transferring the external tyrant to the internal world of man, the soul, just as Plato had used an external state in the *Republic* only as a means to show how the parts of the soul must be in a fitting harmony, with *logos* in command.

In ch. 7, at the end of the exposition proper and just before the mechanical *partitio,* Longinus listed "tyranny" as one of the things which must be despised before the soul could be great and sublime.

**contumely. . .shameless impudence:** the only use of *hybris* in the text. The usual translation "pride" is only partly correct; much better is Hamlet's fuller phrase "the proud man's contumely," used in his great soliloquy "To be or not to be," at the heart of the tragedy (III.i). Hobbes, in his epitome of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* renders it as "contumely" (1378b23). The only formal definition of *hybris* that has come down from the classical period is Aristotle's: it is what a superior does to an inferior when he hurts him, in word or deed, not for advantage but for the perception which he gets of the victim's shame. The ultimate sin of wealth is not its gross physical wallowing in material pleasures but its corruption of the soul.

"Shameless impudence" is also used only here, although cognate forms of the root "shame" appear often. It is a fitting climax to the sequence of *hybris* and living against the rules. Aristotle, who gives it a formal definition in the *Rhetoric* (1383b15), says that it is a "slighting lack of emotion with respect to the vices which lead to a lowering of the opinion held of one by others." The shameless one slights decency because he has no emotional feeling about it—and in this "lazy apathy" of which "Stoics boast" (Pope, *Essay on Man* II.101), Longinus is probably "cutting down" the Stoic philosopher with whom he is arguing.

**to gaze:** in the great passage on man's nature (ch. 35), Longinus had said that nature designed man to be a spectator of the cosmos and, as a result of the grandeur and sublimity which he beheld, to be an emulator and imitator of its greatness. This is the doctrine of man the animal with an upright vision. In 14.3, Longinus says that the man who does not write for the ages will have his soul made "blind" and his works will not survive for a "later fame"—a word which he uses here in ch. 44 in this same sentence. When a man lets the cravings and their brood usurp the sublime nature of his soul, he will become blind both to his immediate cultural milieu and its eternal content. Segal (p. 135) discusses man as a *contemplator mundi* and, in n. 28 of his article, cites references to the doctrine found in ancient literature.

**speech and writing. . .later fame:** in "speech and writing," we find Longi-

our lives, and for the greatness of our souls to dwindle and wither away and become what no one will emulate, when mortal man wonders utterly at his own bloated parts and neglects to develop what is deathless. 9. You see, no one who in making a judgment has accepted a bribe may still come to be a free and sound judge of what is justifiable and fine (you see, what belongs to the bribe-taker necessarily seems to him fine and justifiable); whenever

nus' third and penultimate pun on *logos*. Speeches and writings have become so corrupt that no rational account in speech or writing can be made of them; hence they will have no later fame, either by their own qualities or by critical evaluation. (See below n. on "**as well as to us**"; also Appendix A, entries 9.2 and 13.2.)

The phrase "later fame" recalls the splendid vision (14.3) of the part to be played in imitation and emulation by posterity as well as by the past. As Segal says (p. 124), "What is sublime. . .is eternal, and what aims at eternity becomes sublime."

**what no one will emulate:** one word in Greek; LSJ translate it as "unenviable," but this loses Longinus' point—that it is possible for man so to corrupt the natural potential for sublimity in his soul that he will himself cease to be what merits emulation and imitation.

The phrase "the greatness of our souls" deliberately echoes the philosopher's debased parallel phrase: "superiorities of the souls"—a parallelism which is not translatable into English. Longinus is not only answering the philosopher point for point, but is also arguing that there is no "dearth" or "infertility" of potential greatness, that the amount of "psychic greatness" in the world is the same.

**mortal man wonders. . .what is deathless:** like Plato, Longinus rejects the Protagorean assertion that "man is the measure of all things"; it is god who is the measure (*Laws* 4.716c). The philosopher's environmental heresy is a form of such atheistic humanism, whereas Longinus is advocating what Segal (p. 134) calls "divine humanism."

**bribe. . .justifiable and fine:** Longinus now indulges in development at the same time that he links together many references to "judgment." In ch. 1, he had urged Terentianus "critically to decide most truly with him" concerning the notes which he has written on sublimity: such is the young man's duty and his nature (1.2). In ch. 6, Longinus says that such adjudication, based on a *pure* knowledge of true sublimity, must be extended over many years of experience before one can attain to judgment. And in 7.4, he says that the "judgment" of many men in many places at many times produces from discord of manners and tongues a concord of sound approval. Here in ch. 44, he draws an elaborate analogy between the judges of a polity and the judges of literature: just as the man who pursues wealth and luxury corrupts his body with disease, so the judge who takes bribes cannot be sound and healthy and free. In the adjectives "justifiable and fine," Longinus shows that he intends both political and aesthetic magistrates. He then develops this development as he imagines each man in the republic of letters as a judge; should men take the

bribes determine our lives, and the chasing after others' deaths and the lying in wait for settlements, and the purchasing of profit from every source at the

bribes of wealth, esteem, reputation, and power—as he listed them in ch. 7—there will be left no honest critic of literature, and even appreciation of what has been great in the past will cease to exist.

The metaphorical analogy dramatizes the abstract elements of chs. 6 and 7: the bribers are those to the worldiness of "death devote," and, like Eve, they see their temporal esteems as "justifiable and fine"; in order to obtain their materialistic ends, they bribe the legal judge, in the fond hope that his perverted judgement will alter the reality of things. The judge, once he has accepted the bribe, can no longer pass a true judgment, for he has accepted along with the bribe the necessary standards of worldly values—in fact, the bribe is itself one of those worldly values. Similarly, the true critic-judge must not accept the bribes offered him by those who corrupt literature. Bad authors and bad books—as we know from our own lists of best-sellers—reap vast material rewards, and everyone who has ever reviewed books—or plays, concerts, movies, television, records—knows the pressures exerted upon him to "adjust" his standards to those of his immediate society. Most critics who wish to escape this pressure resort to savage satire, like Juvenal, and make a career of acerbity; they deliberately select bad books and expend their wit in devastating reviews—only to become corrupted by their own savage indignation. If Longinus lived in the first century A.D., he was contemporary with Juvenal and Tacitus—though it does not really matter when he lived, for the materialism pervading the early centuries of the Roman empire provides the corrupt milieu which he has in mind; what that materialism did to their genius we know. It is the greatest tribute payable to Longinus to see that he escaped the corruption of satire, the kind of corruption that drove Swift mad. He owes his escape to his Platonism, to his view that literature is a human embodiment of the divine, ageless, and eternal *logos*.

Longinus then modulates his metaphorical analogy from the professional critic-judge to "everyman," for in the republic of letters all men are critics. If they succumb to the materialism of their age, they will corrupt themselves. As a result, their literature will reflect that corruption and itself be corrupt. All will eventually sink into a turgid dullness, bedaubed with tinsel glitter but hollow at the core, like that envisioned almost epically by Pope at the end of the *Dunciad* (IV.649-54):

> Religion, blushing, veils her sacred fires,
> An unawares Morality expires.
> Nor public flame, nor private, dares to shine,
> Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine!
> Lo! thy dread empire, Chaos, is restored;
> Light dies before thy uncreating word.

As the previous picture of the diseased man showed the corruption of the standard implicit in posterity, so the picture of the bribed judge shows the corruption of the standard explicit in the past.

**chasing after. . .settlements:** the Roman satirists and moralists never tire of

price of our souls—each man made captive and prisoner from the love of material things—would we, indeed, in such a plague-stricken corruption of life believe that there still remains any kind of free and unbribable judge to decide what works are great and will come down through the ages and that this judge will not be out-electioneered by the craving for gain? 10. But perhaps for such as us it is better to be governed than to be free, since such acquisitiveness, if let entirely loose, as if from prison, against its neighbors, would burn up the world with its vices. 11. And, on the whole, I said that ease was the expending the natures bred nowadays—an ease in which all of

damning legacy-hunters—those who fawned on wealthy childless men in hopes of being named the heir. Cases exist where the legacy-hunter, once the will was made, killed his benefactor. Both "chase" and "lying in wait" are powerful terms: the first is from a word meaning "wild beast"—one thinks of Dryden's *Secular Masque:* "thy chase had a beast in view"—and the second is a military term meaning "ambush."

**love of material things:** there is a tiny lacuna here; we have followed others in supplying a word that fits the context.

**free and unbribable. . .ages:** both here and above Longinus uses the word "free"; in response to the philosopher's cry for external freedom Longinus is again emphasizing internal freedom.

On the place of "the ages" or "eternity" in Longinus, see Segal's article.

**out-electioneered:** Longinus not only ties the peroration as a whole to the rest of the speech but also links the parts of the peroration. "Craving" was the word used at the beginning of his reply to the philosopher.

"Out-electioneered" means "to defeat in an election," usually by unfair means. Our idiom "to buy" an election captures the sense, but we wished to capture something of the polysyllabic original. The root of the word is the Greek word for "beginning" which, by extension, comes to mean "rule," "office," "political power." In philosophy the word is a technical term meaning "principle." It is barely possible that Longinus intends a complex bi-lingual pun on the "principate," for by the middle of the first century the offices of the empire had already been put up for sale. Of course, if one corrupts one's principles, nothing but ill can follow.

**burn up:** editors accept Markland's emendation "drawn" instead of the ms. reading "burn." Since passion may be seen either as a flood or a fire, and since Longinus often combines them—as in the comparison of Cicero and Demosthenes in ch. 12—we see no reason to alter the ms.

**ease:** the Greek word suggests being idle, sluggish, frivolous, sloppy in literary style (*e.g.*, Libanius I.76); it is more pejorative than the Latin *otium*—the great gift of the Roman Empire—which is often used as a synonym for peace. At the beginning of his reply to the philosopher, Longinus had used the word "peace"; here at the end he exposes that "peace" for what it was—not peace, but a war of cravings.

us (except for a few) live out our lives, without struggling or undertaking anything except for the sake of praise and pleasure and not for the benefit

**the expending. . .our lives:** we may think of Wordsworth's sonnet, written when the poet saw beyond the Napoleonic wars to the fate of what Napoleon called "a nation of shopkeepers":

> The world is too much with us; late and soon
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
> Little we see in nature that is ours;
> We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon.

**praise and pleasure:** perhaps a hendiadys—the pleasure of praise. Longinus uses this word for "praise" only one other time (28.3), where he had quoted Xenophon:

> You consider toil to be the leader of a *pleasant* life; and you have received *into your souls* the finest and most warlike possession, for you rejoice in being *praised* more than in everything else.
>
> (Italics ours)

"Praise" is a technical term in rhetoric (see ch. 8); it signifies a speech extolling excellence as distinguished from an encomium, which is a speech extolling great deeds. The most popular form of such a speech in the empire was the *panegyric,* which was debased from the high standard set by Isocrates in his famous *Panegyric* until it becomes a pretext for fulsome ingenuity in lauding the emperor. Since many emperors neither performed great deeds nor had human excellence, the substance of such panegyrical praises was void; even today the word suggests uncritical adulation. Those whom Xenophon was praising rejoiced in praise like that they received from Xenophon because they had excellence, because they were willing to place struggle and toil as the true leader and emperor of life, that which made it pleasant. The gods, as Hesiod said, have placed sweat before excellence. Longinus saw the Roman empire as loving the pleasure of praise not because they valued struggle but because they loved idle ease. It is this point which he wishes to drive home—by means of his lucid occultation—to the young recipient of his speech, the Roman Terentianus.

As praise is a technical term, so is pleasure (see ch. 4): it signifies a "pleasing rhetorical touch." Longinus puns frequently on the generic and technical meanings of the term; here, in the closing chapter, he may again be punning, as he takes one last opportunity to remind his readers that the way to true sublimity and greatness does not lie in imitating such writers as Lysias and Hyperides—both noted for their "pleasing touches."

**benefit:** Longinus has ended where he began, with the word and notion of "benefit." He had, in the opening sentence, criticized Caecilius for not doing anything beneficial for his reader—the special aim of all authors; his work was beneath its subject and omitted discussion of emotion. So, too, at the end of the second paragraph of the first chapter, Longinus had quoted approvingly the maxim that men resemble gods in two things: in doing good deeds and benefits and in truth. His own "speech" is intended to do both, although modestly enough he closes on a quiet note with only the word "benefit." He is now ready to take up the subject of the emotions.

derived from emulation and a worthy esteem. 12. "It is best to let these things go at random," and to make room for what comes next—this was to be the emotions, about which I promised to write in their own collection of notes; this topic has a place in the other parts of speeches and writing and of sublimity itself, as well as to us . . .

**It is best. . .at random:** from Euripides' *Electra* (379); but the words also echo Jocasta's infamous advice to Oedipus *(Oedipus Rex,* 979):

> It is best to live at random, how we may.

**I promised to write. . .collection of notes:** again Longinus ties the end and the beginning of his speech together: in 1.2, he had referred to the speech as a "collection of notes." The understatement is the more powerful as we begin to appreciate the artistry and emotion, the technique and sublimity, embodied in his synthesis. Of course, some paragraphs in the work are written as if they were no more than notes and jottings (*e.g.,* chs. 41 and 42); their style is almost as cramped as that of Aristotle.

**as well as to us:** the speech ends in the middle of a sentence, like Thucydides' History. We call it a *speech,* for such is Longinus' own word—*logos.* As in earlier instances, he is punning on the various senses of *logos:* speech (or oration), writing, discourse, rational explanation. Russell remarks, "We can be confident that very little of the book is missing at the end"—and if he means the first book, he is probably right. The last sentence, starting with "in their own," is written in a different hand in the ms.; there would be room for a few more words. Few as they may have been, we wish that we had them.

Appendix A

# Supplementary Notes

1.1. **what sort of thing. . .essentially is:** The Greek word translated "essentially is" is *ὑπάρχω*, which signifies "to begin (from) underneath." The sense of "initiate" predominates in earlier Greek; by the time of Aristotle, it means "exist really" (*e.g.*, Aristotle, *De Caelo* 297b22, *Metaphysics* 1046b10), as distinct from "appear (*φαίνομαι*)". It is generally translated as "is," though in more technical contexts one finds "subsists"; but a distinction was observed even in antiquity: W. Dittenberger *Sylloge inscriptionum Graecarum* 587.2-3: "a man who is (*εἰμί*) good and who is essentially (*ὑπάρχω*) well disposed." The distinction made by Chrysippus (Diels, *Doxogr. Graec.* 462.1)—that *ὑπάρχω* is used of the present, *ὐφίστημι* of the past and future—does not seem to have been generally observed. Thus, for example, we find Philo, *On the Creation* 172, saying that God "is (*εἰμί*) and is from eternity (*ὑπάρχω*)" (Loeb tr.). Longinus uses the word to indicate what the essential nature of a thing is: compare the uses in 7.1 and 24.2.

1.3 **thrown around their glorious reputations:** the verb "throw around (*περι-βάλλω*)" contains several idiomatic possibilities: (1) one may throw x (accusative) around y (dative); (2) one may throw x (dative) around y (accusative); (3) in the middle, the verb can also mean "amplify, expand, and surpass" (LSJ). As we shall see, Longinus is probably playing with these notions as well. Translators differ: Prickard elects for "throwing eternity around their reputations"; Fyfe blends: "clothed them with immortal fame"; Grube is loosely free: "to which great writers owe them supremacy and lasting renown"; Dorsch is similarily free: "won for themselves an eternity of fame": Russell, in his edition, translates "clothed their own glorious deeds with eternity"; in his translation, "have given life to their own fame."

With Prickard, we have elected for (1): the image is of investing, *i.e.*, throwing x (accusative) around y (dative). Russell is aware of both possibilities (1) and (2), though his reference to a supposed parallel (erroneous in its numeration: he means 40.2, not 40.1) disregards the difference between the active and middle uses of the verb. His point, that *ἑαυτῶν* decides for (1), is beautifully observed.

Since the "ages" are greater than any individual reputation, they can do more for the individual reputation than the reputation can do for them: cf. 9.3; 14.3; 36.2. The full phrase "glorious reputation (*εὔκλεια*)" is intended to suggest both the strong sense of the simple root *κλέος* (as far back as Homer) and the added strength of the compound *εὔκλεια* (Homer, Antiphon, Thucydides, Xenophon, Plato, etc.: LSJ).

Longinus may also be playing with the sense of "surpass" (cf. 36.2). Further, he may be playing with the technical rhetorical sense of *περιβάλλω*, and, more espcially, the noun *περιβολή*: commoner, however, in later rhetoricians like

Hermogenes and Philostratus.

2.3 **"too much" and useless:** the word for "too much ( περιττός )," as Russell observes, often takes its flavor from the adjective with which it is coupled. Fundamentally it suggests excess, though not necessarily in a pejorative sense: it may simply mean "extraordinary" or "odd" in mathematics. Aristotle (*Politics* 1265a) uses it of the literary quality of the Platonic dialogues—they are "striking" (LSJ). In 40.2, Longinus refines this meaning to diction, where he opposes it to words that are common and public; in 3.4, the quality of excess is distinctly pejorative. Perhaps the closest parallel occurs in 34.2, where Longinus says that it may be "too much," *i.e.*, unnecessary, to go through all this for those who understand.

3.1 **bold:** along with "impressive ( σεμνός )," the word "bold ( ὀγκηρός )" is frequently used of tragedy, as here in ch. 3. (*E.g.*, Sophocles remarked that in the plays of his first period—all of which we have lost—he imitated Aeschylean "boldness [ ὄγκος ]"). What is signified is a dynamic, not a static, quality, achieved by expansion (see Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1707b26ff.). Our verb "swell," as in T. S. Eliot's line "to swell a prologue," conveys the sense: to produce a sense of bigness by growing size, and to demand attention to one's impressiveness by expansion. Such expansion may be solid, in which case ὄγκος is good, or puffy and spongy and loose, in which case ὄγκος is bad. Coupled with the phenomenon is a sense of boldness.;*e.g.*, Plato (*Laws* 728E) conjoins the synonymous "puffed-up" and "audacious (θρασύς )." Milton's description of Satan in the presence of Gabriel (*Paradise Lost* IV.985-89) shows both the physical and aesthetic and moral senses of the phenomenon:

> On th' other side Satan alarm'd
> Collecting all his might dilated stood,
> Like *Teneriffe* or *Atlas* unremov'd:
> His stature reacht the Sky, and on his Crest
> Sat horror Plum'd.

Such words for ὀγκηρός as hitherto used by translators—"pompous, majestic, dignified, grand, magniloquent"—do not convey the complex sense properly. Hence we have used "bold" with full sense of its etymological significance (see regular note).

3.2. **high-flown:** the Greek word is μετέωρα; its perjorative sense here probably derives from Aristophanes' play lampooning Socrates, the *Clouds*, as well as from various derogatory uses in Plato of the derivative μετεωρολογία. In Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* (7.32), the word is used to describe Domitian as being "raised up" with expectation of hearing something sensational, a use paralleled by Philo (*On the Change of Names* 67). As the parallels from Philo and Philostratus show, the word signifies an empty and unjustified sense of exaltation.

3.4. **run aground on a listing and vicious emulation:** the verb translated "run aground (ἐποκέλλω)" was emended to ἐξοκέλλω by Wilomowitz, a reading which Russell accepts in his text primarily on the grounds that "the lexica give no instance of ἐποκέλλω used metaphorically." The fineness of Wilamowitz's perception seems at first supported by such metaphorical uses of ἐξοκέλλω as we find, for example, in Dio Cassius 67.14, where Domitian is said to have persecuted many for "drifting away into" Jewish ways. So, too, Dio uses ἐξοκέλλω in 57.13 to suggest one of the alternative explanations for the shift in Tiberius' character: either he was a hypocrite or "his good nature drifted away." Yet both of these passages exploit the force of the prefix ἐξ which signifies "out of," "away from"—that is, drifting off course; the natural result of such drifting away from or off course is to run aground, but the writers who use the form ἐξοκέλλω wish to emphasize not so much where those who drifted eventually ended but where they drifted from. Starting well, they ended ill. Longinus, on the other hand, wishes to emphasize where the drifters ended; hence he uses the prefix ἐπι. For this reason we have kept the reading of the ms. (Furthermore, Aristotle [*Mirabilia* 844a30] seems to use the word metaphorically of tunny-fish.)

4.1 **intent upon perceiving:** the Greek word, ἐπινοητικός, is translated as "full of ingenuity" (Havell), "ingenious" (Roberts), "acute" (Prickard), "full of ideas" (Fyfe), "ingenious" (Russell, who also suggests "original" and "inventive"). The nexus of words based on the root νοῦς (mind) which Longinus uses is very large; we have, so far as possible, tried to use words based on the root "-cept," *e.g.*, concept, "perception," etc. The noun from which is derived the adjective used here appears twice in the work (1.2 and 32.3). In the first use, Longinus argues that Caecilius must be pardoned for his errors because of his seriousness and his "intentness on perceiving," that is, he was concerned to be perceptive even if, in fact, he was superficial. In the second use—a noble passage on the nature of man—Longinus says that the whole cosmos does not suffice for the thrust of man's powers of theoretical *perceptiveness* (διάνοια); his "intentness of perceiving (ἐπίνοια)" steps outside of the limits of the bounding universe. The word, then, unless otherwise specified, is highly complimentary, for it is grounded in the nature of man which enables him to be and to perceive the sublime, or, at the very least, to have a longing to do so.

6.1 **the result of much experiment:** Greek observance of the distinction between experience (ἐμπειρία) and experiment (πεῖρα) may be illustrated by a few citations. In Plato, *Laws* (857D), we read that doctors who practise solely by "experience" are "without rationale" or, as the Loeb renders it, "devoid of theory" (ἄνευ λογοῦ). Plato contrasts such doctors with those who discuss disease in the light of its origin and with reference to the whole nature of the body (cf. also in Plato, *Gorgias* 463B, 465A; *Laws* 93A, *Phaedo* 220B). Aristotle (*Poetics* 1459b32) says that the hexameter has been found most suitable for epic as a result of experiment. In Hellenistic times, Polybius (12.25d.1), stressing the power of verbal dexterity, makes the same distinction and uses the same medical analogy: doctors who know only theory, acquired in libraries, can out-argue doctors who have made an experimentation that is true

to the nature of their accomplishments; verbal skill can, Polybius admits, prevail against the approved scrutiny conferred by real work. Three centuries later (first century A.D.), Philo observes the same distinction between "experience" and "experimentation" in *On the Special Laws* 4.153: doctors do not obtain their positions by lot, but are "approved after scrutiny by means of "experimentation." And a century later, Hermogenes distinguishes the two words carefully, on the opening page of his book *On Ideas:* imitation and emulation, he says, which function only with "bare experience (ἐμπειρία) and a kind of irrational contact," will not hit what is right; one must instead "experiment" (πειράω) with what is knowable and teachable. Galen, a somewhat younger contemporary of Hermogenes, makes decision depend on experiment, in his work *On the Diagnosis of the Emotions* (3.2-3). In his essay *On the Black Bile* (8.1), he says that cognition of the subject came to him only by means of "long experimentation" (πεῖρα).

7.2. **exultant resemblance:** the ms. reading is ἀνάθημα, which is almost universally taken as a textual crux. The Greek word means literally "that which has been set up." In Homer it means "delight, ornament" (*Odyssey* 1.152 and 21.430); it later refers to anything offered or set up in a temple, a "votive offering." Grube seems almost alone in translating the ms. ("we receive it as a joyous offering"; see his article "Notes on the περὶ ὕψους," *American Journal of Philology* 78 [1957]: 364-65, where he cites in addition to Homer parallels from Plato's *Hippias Minor* 364B and *Critias* 110B). Russell asserts that such a meaning is "impossible." Emendations are numerous, the closest being ἀνάστημα, *i.e.*, "prominence, erection," which Russell translates as "exultant pride." It is best to keep the ms. reading. The argument of the passage is based on an elaborate comparison: "just as. . .somehow in this way." The soul is to examine literature carefully, so as not to be deceived by an "image" of greatness, by what is puffed up and worthy of contempt. Longinus then elaborates the point in a sentence which may be presented schematically thus:

A. Our souls are lifted up by true sublimity
AA. and are filled with delight and great glory
B. taking on a kind of joyful ?
BB. as if themselves having given birth to what they heard.

The ms. reading ἀνάθημα acquired metaphorical uses early; for example, Socrates says to Hippias (*Hippias Minor* 364B): "You speak well, Hippias, and your reputation will be an ἀνάθημα (memorial or testament, like a statue) to your wisdom both for the city of Elis and for your parents." Similarly, Isocrates—in a moving passage from his *Antidosis* (7), written when he was 87—says that he wishes to leave a speech that will be a memorial of himself (as a likeness of his mind) and which will outlast "bronze statues (ἀνάθημα)." Euripides, extending the image further (fr. 518: Nauck), says that good children are a "kind of treasure to homes and ἀναθήματα for those who bore them," that is, living memorials and images. The meaning "resemblance" is clear in all three passages.

Longinus, then, is playing with such metaphorical senses as these: he may, in

fact, be alluding to the passage from Euripides. Both he and his master Plato are fond of comparing the activities of the soul, as it conceives ideas, to pregnancy and birth (*e.g.*, 9.1, 14.3, the first of which led Manutius to emend *ἀνάθημα* to *παράστημα*). The verb "take (*λαμβάνω*)" is used of the soul as it experiences particular emotions and also of partaking in marriage; the compound *ἀνα-λαμβάνω* means "to conceive a child"; it is possible that the ms. here should read *ἀναλαμβάνω* and that the second *ἀνα* fell out because of its close proximity to *ἀνάθημα*. The soul, when it hears something sublime, undergoes its own process of conception and gestation; it is "filled" (*πληρόω*: used of pregnant women) with exaltation and glory—"as if it had itself given birth to what it heard." What the soul takes on is a likeness to the original creation of the literary work, a statue (*ἀνάθημα*), which is called "exultant," the kind of emotion felt by the mother of a baby or by an artist who has created a work of art. And just as the original work of art was a kind of offspring of the artist's soul, so the experience of that work of art is a parallel offspring to the soul of the audience. Longinus makes this psychic parallelism the way for men to advance their souls to sublimity.

7.4 **speeches and writings:** the exact meaning of *λόγων* is much disputed: "people of different literary views," "languages," "manners" (reading *τρόπων*), "historical periods" (reading *χρόνων*). We have translated it as usual.

9.2 **than any speech:** here appears the first use made by Longinus of the word *λόγος* in the singular; for its plural meaning see ch. 1 n. on **speeches and writings.** He is, of course, punning on the double sense of the word: the sublimity of Ajax's silence transcends both speech and reason. The silence of Ajax is irrational (without *logos*) for he is intransigent, and inarticulate, even in death. Of course, given the irrationality, no speech could be found. But in the underworld, where all things suffer a Dead Seachange, silence may be lifted up to sublime eloquence.

9.12. **emotional experiences:** the Greek word is *πάθημα*, which is to be distinguished from *πάθος* (translated as "emotion"); the ending *-ημα* denotes the result of an action. The meaning of "emotion" seems to preclude its being "action" in the strict sense of the term, and Greek has no cognate with the root *παθ-* ending in the active termination *—σις*; Aristotle, however, (*Poetics* 1452b11) classifies *πάθος* as a "destructive action (*πράξις*)." When the *-μα* ending is added, the word signifies the change undergone by the thing which feels the *πάθος*. Longinus uses the word only one other time (10.1), and with the same neat precision: Sappho takes her *πάθος*—erotic madness—and selects the "emotional" experiences (*παθήματα*) that are attendant on it. In Greek logic, *πάθημα* signifies an "accidental" property.

9.13 **its own measures:** two verbs appear in the ocean-image: *ὑποχωρέω* and *ἐρημόω*: the first was used, without a prefix, in 9.9, where the author of Genesis is said to have "made room" for the power of God in a worthy manner. The simple verb means to "make" or "give" room, that is, to draw back so that the presence and force of something else can move in. Longinus uses the simple form only once again, in 44.12, where he says "it is best to make room for what comes next." In

describing Homer here, Longinus adds the prefix ὑπο, which has three senses (LSJ): it means "under" and applies to verbs of both rest and motion; it shows a gradual process; it suggests secrecy. The first two meanings are applicable to Longinus' verb ὑποχωρέω: the ocean is said to be "giving way down into itself gradually," just as the old Homer was gradually sinking. The difficulty is caused by the phrase "into himself (εἰς ἑαυτόν)," for we do not have two parties, as in the passage where Moses made room for God's power, but only one, Homer—or his analogue, the ocean. The same verb is used of eels withdrawing into the depths (LSJ), and by Aristides Quintilianus, a third century A.D. author, to describe the ebb of the tide (*On Music* 3.17). Aelian (*On Animals* 10.48) uses two verbs, both with the ὑπο- prefix, to describe the movement of the Nile with respect to "its own boundaries (τὰ ἑαυτοῦ μέτρα)." Longinus' word "ebbings (ἄμπωτις)" is used both of the ocean and of rivers; thus we may deduce the simile; as the god Ocean floods the land and then sucks back his waters, so the divine Homer was a flood in the *Iliad* and sucked back his powers in the *Odyssey*. "Flood" is a frequent metaphor in Longinus for the sublime genius at the height of its powers (12.2, 35.4).

The second verb used by Longinus (ἐρημόω) means "to desert, to leave wasted, to be solitary"; from it we get our words "eremite" and "hermit." It is generally taken as passive here, but it is better to construe it as middle: Ocean is withdrawing into itself and deserting itself, that is, abandoning, leaving the land which it had flooded. Its desertion is located "around its own peculiar measures" (*i.e.*, borders). The preposition "within (περί)" Russell finds difficult and even suspect; but Longinus' use of περί to mean "in" or "within" has a parallel in 10.3, where Sappho is said not to have one emotion within (περί) her but a company of them. The use in 34.2 is also close: Hyperides has many urbanities "in (περί)" him.

Longinus, then, is creating out of the materials taken from Homer himself his own brilliant image for the declining Homer. The word "wandering," with which the Greek sentence closes, is, as Russell suggests, a conceit: Homer wanders in his hero's wanderings. The flood-image dominates over the tidal image. In the *Iliad*, there had been a "pouring" of emotions one after another (9.13); now the flood is over and the ocean withdraws into itself, deserting its flooded kingdom for its own boundaries. It is better to see floods as the primary image rather than tides, although the latter is possible, for "flood" suggests better than "tide" the overwhelming sublimity and power of Ocean, both the god and the natural phenomenon.

There is a striking parallel to the image in Chapman's *Bussy D'Amboise* (I.ii.153 ff.):

> His great heart will not down, 'tis like the sea,
> That partly by his own internal heat,
> Partly the stars' daily and nightly motion,
> (Their heat and light), and partly of the place
> (The divers frames), but chiefly by the moon,
> Bristled with surges, never will be won
> (No, not when th' heart of all those powers are burst)
> To make retreat into his settled home,
> Till he be crown'd with his own quiet foam.

As in the passage from Longinus, the image and the object of the image modulate back and forth.

10.1 **brings itself out:** the mss. all read ἐκφέρω (bring out) here; Tollius emended to ἐμφέρω (bring in), an emendation approved but not accepted by Pearce but now so widely accepted that Russell does not even include the ms. reading in the apparatus of his big edition. Editors appeal to a supposed parallel in 12.2. Ch. 10 begins a new section, marked by the transitional phrase "come, now"; it deals with the principle of selection ( τὸ ἐκλέγειν ). Longinus first defines the nature of the material available to the writer, which consists of parts, only *some* of which have a natural connection with one another. As a result of this fact, he says, a necessary cause of sublimity is the ability to select from—and here we meet the crux-phrase. Pearce's analysis of the ms. reading—although he preferred the emendation—is excellent: the ἐκφερομένα are those things which, as far as they stand out in the *eventus*, "offer themselves to the poet who is handling the matter." There is no notion of "bring in," for the material is conceived of as an existing whole—the parts are "fundamentally in session with their material," as Longinus says. The verb "bring out," whether middle or passive, refers to those parts which offer themselves to the artist's power of selection.

The supposed parallel passage (12.2) is not really relevant: there Longinus is discussing "development," which he defines as "filling in with from all the parts and commonplaces" that "contribute" or "bring in" to matters. But "parts" here includes both those that adhere by nature and those which do not, for commonplaces are, by definition, not organically related material. In 10.1, the disputed passage, Longinus specifically says that the parts selected are those which "come at the right moment" and are compared in their wholeness to a body: the image also supports the notion of what grows from within rather than what comes from outside.

13.2 **the story says:** again, *logos* in the singular, which can also mean "what men say," *i.e.*, common speech, traditional accounts. Once again Longinus appears to be punning on the meaning of *logos*. Apollo, the god of reason (*logos*), is also the god of inspiration. The common account or "story" is that what happens at Delphi is both divinely inspired and rational.

14.2 **sketch beforehand:** we introduce here one of our very few emendations, which Russell's apparatus shows M. L. West to have arrived at also: the mss. have "sketch in addition": by dropping one letter we change it to "sketch beforehand" and avoid the pleonastic effect of "also (καί)" and "in addition (πρός )"—not that Longinus does not employ the combination elsewhere (*e.g.*, 15.1). The change is not major and is perhaps unnecessary.

15.5 **And Aeschylus is audacious:** a very difficult sentence syntactically, for it consists of two concessive clauses, the first of which is interrupted by a long quotation plus a subordinate clause modifying the subject of the quotation, followed by the main clause. Aeschylus is the subject of the first two clauses, Euripides of the main clause. The problem is complicated by the fact that, in the

first concessive clause, Longinus praises Aeschylus, in the second he censures him: the censuring clause only is to be taken with the main clause; the two concessive clauses are themselves in opposition. The sentence yields to analysis but requires effort.

20.1 **"The assailant. . .by voice":** Longinus' word for "assailant" is *τύπτων*, whose root appeared in the word "vivid typical description" just before the quotation; it also means "boxer," that is, one who strike blows. The word for "victim" has the same root as "emotion (*πάθος*)." The word translated as "bearing" is "figure (*σχῆμα*)." It is difficult not to believe that Longinus chose his quotation with some awareness of all these puns.

20.2 **Next. . .standing still:** Longinus continues his play on words: the verbs "advance" and "remain at a standstill" are, in the Greek text, juxtaposed; "quietude" is said to lie in "standing," a word which also means "revolutionary faction, discord," and which is, in addition, a rhetorical term: Hermogenes wrote at length on *στάσις* in the sense of "issues" (Spengel II.133-74).

21.2 **catapult:** the Greek word is *ὄργανον*, a word with even more applications than its usual English translation "instrument." Without an adjective, it still commonly meant "an instrument of war"; in conjunction with *ἀφίημι* it clearly refers to a catapult. The picture of emotion as a missile catapulted out of the psyche fits with the use of "impulse" in the definition given in ch. 20.2.

22.1. **stamp:** Longinus uses the word *χαρακτήρ* only here, although it had long been a standard term in criticism to signify the various "styles"—*e.g.*, Demetrius (35, 36) and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Composition* 1). Neither Demetrius nor Dionysius uses any mollifier (see ch. 32); Longinus inserts one ("as it were"), with, perhaps, a kind of inverse wit; he wishes to re-vitalize the etymological impact which had been lost in the technical application to criticism: *χαρακτήρ* meant originally the mark engraved on coins or stone.

23.1 **change:** the word used—*ἐνάλλαξις* —is a "variation" of the usual term *ἀλλοίωσις* (making something other than it is)." As Russell observes, *ἀλλοίωσις* was the term used by Caecilius. Tiberius in his book *On Figures* (Spengel III.80), lists the five items which Caecilius said were affected by *ἀλλοίωσις*: word, case, number, person, and tense. Longinus has "varied" Caecilius' list by omitting "word" and substituting "gender." These are really the same—species for genus—as Zonaeus makes clear in his book *On Figures* (Spengel III.168). Both Zonaeus and Alexander (*On Figures* [Spengel III.33]) include "emotion" in their lists; that subject was omitted by Caecilius, much to Longinus' distress.

23.3 **Jocasta:** Russell notes the two examples of hiatus, which surround the word "Jocasta"; presumably some joke is intended by such an excess, since hiatus, like incest, was something to be avoided. Hiatus occurs when a word ending with a vowel precedes a word beginning with a vowel: the result is a gap in the flow of the

voice which the Greeks found ugly. Dryden quotes one permissible and one ugly example from Chapman's translation of Homer (preface to *Examen Poeticum):*

Apollo's priest to th'Argive fleet doth bring.

"There," Dryden remarks, "we see he makes it not *the Argive* but *th'Argive,* to shun the shock of the two vowels immediately following each other. But. . .he gives a bad example of the quite contrary kind," whereupon he quotes:

Th'army's plague, the strife of kings.

Here, Dryden says, the hiatus produces "a most horrible ill-sounding gap betwixt" the word "the" and "army's."

23.4 **exaggeration:** the ms. reads "exaggeration (*αὔξησις*)," *i.e.,* boasting, claiming qualities and attainments for oneself in a proud way. Most editors accept Robortello's emendation "development (*αὕξησις*)." Longinus defines development in 12.1: he says that his definition is different from that generally given, for he makes it consist of "multiplicity (*πληθύς*)." Here in ch. 23, however, he does not use either word, for he is discussing "pluralizing (*πλῆθος*)", not "multiplicity (*πληθύς*)." Throughout the text he consistently uses cognates of *πλῆθος* (pluralizing) to signify grammatical plurals; hence the cognate used here cannot be taken as equivalent to "multiplicity" and, consequently, to "development." In view of all this, and also of the fact that synonyms for boasting are frequent in the chapter, we have retained the ms. reading. "Exaggeration" is the aim: plurality, hyperbole, and emotion are the means.

27.2 **the use should have priority:** Roberts translates, "this figure should be used by preference," an interpretation preferred in general. Russell not only objects to the interpretation but also adopts Manutius' emendation to *πρόσχρησις*. LSJ list the meaning "use by preference" but cite only Longinus and mark the sense "dubious." Russell argues that the prefix *προ-* "in compounds seldom (and perhaps never) means 'in preference,' unless some clear idea of choice or value is present in the simple verb." His emendation, however, requires us to conclude that Longinus used the prefix *προσ* without any etymological impact—and such is not Longinus' way. Given Longinus' normal sensitivity to the elements which make up a compound word, plus the fact that this is the only use of the word in the text (or of any of its cognates), we are better off retaining the ms. reading. If we examine the simple form of "use (*χρῆσις*)" in Longinus, we find its use here would be—to use the author's own term—"cold," for he has introduced his sentence with the words "For this reason" because he wishes to make a special point about the "use" of this device. And the point is that the use has "priority" in special situations, which Longinus classifies in the clause that follows. Since the prefix *προ-* often indicates priority (*e.g.,* in such words as *προέδρα* [the front seat in a theatre]), it was perfectly proper for Longinus to use *πρόχρησις* in this sense.

30.1 **are often thoroughly blended:** the verb is variously translated: "developed one through another" (Roberts); "mutually interlaced" (Prickard); "presented" (Einarson); "unfold together" (Grube); "involved with each other" (Russell). Russell's note simply has "are completely entangled with one another." Einarson's interpretation of the manuscript is ingenious and deserves mention: "Since however the thought of the discourse and the expression—and the greater part of either— has been unrolled [*i.e.*, as an ancient book was enrolled in the process of reading], come, if of the expressive part there be certain things yet left, let us consider in addition" (square brackets Einarson's).

33.4. **extraneous material:** what the word we have translated as "extraneous" means is debated: Russell summarizes the critical opinion concisely in his note. He tends to agree with Grace B. Ruckh's article (*Classical Philology* 29[1942]:p. 256), in which the author argues, on the basis of criticisms made in the ancient scholia (notes to classical authors), that Longinus is alluding to pedantic fault-finders. Longinus uses the word three times: here, 7.1, and 22.4. It seems always to refer to what is inessential or irrelevant.

33.4: **most luckily:** it is, of course always difficult to know how aware ancient writers were of the root "chance, luck ( *τύχη* )" in its various compounds. Because Longinus has a great sense of etymology, we have assumed that he is aware of the root meaning. The simple form of the adjective ( *εὐτυχής* ) he uses only once, in 16.4, where it is used in a strictly non-literary context. The compound adjective ( *ἐπιτυχής* ), however, is used three times (here, 15.3, 22.1), and always in a strictly literary context. The word denotes successful attainment of an end, and often is exactly like our word "felicitous" or "happy" when used in literary criticism. It would be possible, here, to think that Longinus used the word deliberately: Theocritus is now flawless everywhere, but, if we except the parts of his poems strictly irrelevant to his genre, he "turns out to be" successful, that is, luck as well as art played a part in his success.

34.1. **number. . .greatness:** the ms. reads, in place of "greatness"—Pearce's emendation—the phrase "by the true (*τῷ ἀληθεῖ*)." So far as we can presently tell, no parallel exists for "the true" used in any other way than as an adverbial accusative. Furthermore, even if we should someday find a parallel in form, in logic the contrast of "number" and "truth" makes no sense.

We must, then, either emend the word "true" or add to it some noun. Whichever we chose, the alteration must indicate a quality or kind different from number, or must at least be a periphrasis suggesting such a quality. Pearce elected to change "true (*ἀληθής*)" to "greatness ( *μέγεθος* ); others have tried to supply some word like *ὅρος* (in the sense of "standard").

Ordinarily in Greek, when an author wishes to say that something occurred "by *x*, not by *y*," both nouns are used without a definite article. But Longinus, in 35. has: "not in greatness [no article] but actually in *the* number..." And the phrase used here supplies us not only with a grammatical parallel, but one exactly corresponding in sense as well: a contrast between mere statistics and quality of

excellence. Longinus makes the point in summary; it is exactly the same point which he made when he introduced the problem, in ch. 33. There are, he says, two questions to be asked: (a) whether flawed greatness is better than perfect correctness (33.1); (b) whether more numerous excellences ( πλείους ) or greater ones ( μείζους ) should carry off first prize (33.1). The word "greatness," then, supplies us with a parallel that is both logical and consistent with the argument as a whole.

34.2 **his urbanities are ineffable...inimitable charm:** the passage is a unit, marked by an intricate assonance of interwoven alliteration and a balanced variation of pretty phrasing. Between the words "ineffable" and "inimitable" Longinus inserts the words which he says cannot be said and imitates the graces which he says cannot be imitated. The pattern of alliteration and assonance may be most clearly seen in a list, although the device lacks charm:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ἄφατοι | ἀστεϊσμοί | |
| εὐγένεια | εἰρωνείς | εὐπάλαιστρον |
| σκώμματα | ἐπικείμενα | |
| ἄμουσα | ἀνάγωγα | |
| διασυρμός | ἐπιδέξιος | |
| κωμικόν | κέντρον | |
| πολύ | παιδιᾶς | |
| ἀμίμητον | εἰπεῖν | ἐπαφρόδιτον |

The qualities in the list are phrased with extraordinary variety of syntax, which ranges from the word "good breeding" to the involved long clause "jokes. . . fittingly." The various and varied elements are given unity partly by the alliterative assonance and partly by their genus, that is, all the terms describe Hyperides' wit. Longinus displays his own wit by concluding this *athroismos* (see ch. 23) with the word "charm": Hyperides is so well bred that his wit wants power. We may compare the use of the word in Philostratus (*Life of Apollonius* 6.3), where the youthful and handsome boy Timasion is said to devote much attention to his body and its "gymnastic charm."

35.1. **but also in their number does he fall short:** the Greek text is vexed. The crux-word is ἀπουσίας, which means "absence." Virtually all editors have emended the word to ὁ Λυσίας (Lysias). Until now, Grube has stood alone in defending the ms. Grube translates:

> He is not deficient in the greatness of his virtues, but rather because they are *frequently absent* [italics ours].

38.2 **introduction:** the Greek word is εἰσβολή, literally, a "throwing-in"; it continues the set of etymological puns on the root of "hyperbole." To "throw beyond" (hyperbole) at the point where you "throw in" is indeed hyperbolic. Longinus is mocking Isocrates' mistake not only as a technical error but also to expose the

debased conception of rhetoric which underlies it. Isocrates' failure is to be contrasted with the success of Demosthenes (16.3).

38.3. **dramatic circumstance:** although the noun can and does signify what we have translated as "dramatic circumstances" (Russell: "a great crisis"), it is also a technical term in rhetoric. Hermogenes, in his book *On Invention* (Spengel II.212), includes it under the heading "practical arguments"; he says that it applies to our speeches, our business, our law-suits, our hypotheses, and our lives, for it includes place, time, manner, person, responsibility, and action. The Latin rhetoricians (*e.g.*, Aurelius Augustinus: Halm, p. 141) list parts of "circumstance" in the manner of a modern journalist: *quis, quid, quando, ubi, cur, quem ad modum.* The example taken from Thucydides combines all these plus greatness and an outburst of emotion; hence the language, no matter how incredible it may seem literally, will convey its own persuasion.

38.5. **ecstasy.** the ms. reads ἐξετάσεως , emended by Portus (and accepted by Russell without comment) to "ecstasy (ἐκστάσεως)." The word ἐξετάσις ("scrutiny, review") appears nowhere else in Longinus, nor does it appear to be a technical term, as a noun, in the rhetorical handbooks. No listed meaning of the word makes sense, with the remotely possible exception of "order, arrangement" (LSJ). Perhaps the use of ἐπίτασις (38.6) a few lines below confused the scribe. In view of the parallel points made by Longinus in 17.2 and 32.4, we accept the emendation, for by using "ecstasy" he links the introduction, exposition, and demonstration of his "speech" as he approaches his peroration.

40. **what ought to be constrained:** Longinus has in mind the effective power of extreme conciseness—like that of Thucydides or a Spartan letter (see. ch. 38 n. on **he had a farmland**)—as contrasted with an excess of the virtue. His word (conciseness (*συντομία* )" is listed by Aristotle as one of the three virtues of prose (see ch. 33, n. on **excellences**). As there could be conciseness in thought, so there could be a conciseness in language and rhythm; and as there could be an excess of one, so there could be an excess of the other.

43.2 **blank books of papyrus:** literally, "papyrus sheets of books"; the phrase has been much emended. Toup, whose emendation Russell accepts in part, wished to change it to "jars of onions." Russell accepts "jars" but keeps "book," though he admits that "jars of books" is odd. Since Longinus is at pains to pick out all the "low" items mentioned by Theopompus—"grain sacks" and "burlap bags"—it is hard to believe that he would have overlooked "jars of onions" had they been there. Furthermore, Toup's own parallel passage (Jeremiah 36.2 in the Septuagint) supplies the answer, for Jeremiah makes it clear that these are books of blank sheets: "Take a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken..." (KJV). Toup was especially bothered by the problem of how books could be useful to the Persians—an odd query to come from a scholar. Blank books, of course, would have been useful for keeping records. "Books" appears to be authentic, for it is in the text as quoted by Athenaeus, who does not, however, have *χάρται* or anything

else. The phrase "other useful things" is to be taken with "burlap bags," which would otherwise be empty. If it be necessary to emend at all, one can simply omit χάρται as a gloss on books designed to show that they were blank. The slang meaning of "burlap bags"—Persian trousers—does not seem directly relevant.

44.1 **occult:** Manutius wished to emend the verb "occult (ἐπιπροσθέω)" to "set down in addition (ἐπιπροστίθημι)," and editors have almost universally accepted the emendation. To do so is to lose the wit of the original, and to manufacture problems, for this emendation has necessitated others to support it. Russell summarizes the problem.

The verb "occult," which Longinus used earlier in the work (32.2), means "cast a shadow by means of which measurements are taken"; "to stand in the way of," either as protection or as an eclipsing celestial body; and "to intercept or prevent" the view of someone else (LSJ). The point being "occulted" in these several ways is a profound one: why did oratory decline?—and (since oratory was virtually synonymous with culture in antiquity)—why did culture decline in the first centuries of the Christian era? Longinus will "occult" the subject in a multiplicity of metaphors; he will "protect" Terentianus from superficial and conventional views; and he will "intercept or prevent" these views from full expression. The subject was a dark one, and we may or may not find Longinus' answer impressive; but we ought to see it as the culmination of his concern for aiding men to engage successfully in the most sublime model of conduct that pagan antiquity knew: articulate service in and administration of the polity.

44.4. **boils:** a compound form of the verb ζέω, to which Longinus had objected as low and cacophonous in Herodotus (43.1). It is appropriate here because the subject is "low"—a slave—and because the form does not contain so many sibilants as that in Herodotus. Russell objects to the word as inappropriate "to the passive quality of submission" and suggests emending it to "the non-classical. . .'revives'" (ἀναζέω). But of course Longinus refers to the natural resentment of man at being deprived of his divine power of speech (*logos*). Roman comedies show us how pert and saucy slaves could be with their master; the slave revolts, of which that led by Spartacus in the first century B.C. is only the most famous, show the darker side of the picture.

44.5. **mouths:** the text is badly corrupt throughout the sentence; "dwarves" (νᾶνοι)" is νάοι; the verb parallel to "restricts" is a meaningless group of letters (συνάροι)"; and in the last clause the word "mouths (στόμασι)" was emended by Scaliger to "bodies (σώμασι)," an emendation universally accepted. Since we do not know what the parallel verb is, it seems reckless to change "mouths" to "bodies"; the logic of the passage requires some verb different not simply in degree but in kind as well ("not only. . .but also"). Because dwarves were produced both by cramping confinement and by deprivation of food, "mouths" may well be the right reading. Some kind of "bond" may have been put all around their mouths, like a muzzle on a dog, to prevent any chance feeding by a sympathetic passer-by or even by self-cannibalism. Since we do not know the details of dwarf-rearing, we cannot

tell.

If Scaliger's emendation be accepted, however, a verb indicating difference both of degree and of kind must be devised. Many emendations for the meaningless letters *συνάροι* have been suggested (see Russell's note and apparatus); to these we would like to add one more—the verb *συνερείδω*, which means to "compress tightly, to bind tightly with a bond." It is used of binding or strapping a boxer's fists with thongs (Theocritus 22.68) and of hands bound tightly on a prisoner (Euripides, *Iphigeneia in Taurus* 457); and the simple form is used of bandages put on too tightly (LSJ). The subject of both verbs will be "cages"; the object of both verbs will be "development": the confinement not only restricts growth from developing naturally but also cramps and binds it in, like the feet of Chinese women in former ages.

Such, at least, is the kind of verb needed if we read "bodies"; other emendations may work about as well. So long as the emendation is of this nature, the philosopher's analogy will work out symmetrically and even schematically:

$$\frac{\text{imperial citizens}}{\text{dwarves}} :: \frac{\text{slavery of empire}}{\text{cages}} :: \frac{\text{swaddling-clothes}}{\text{bonds}}$$

Over the course of several generations, it would be possible to breed mini-men and slaves just as it was possible to breed miniature dogs. Furthermore, the external technique implied would fit with the philosopher's view, that the cause of cultural decline is purely external. Remove the cage of empire and the bonds of custom and the resultant freedom would produce a cultural revival.

If we read "mouths," the metaphor is not so sustained—though of course we need not give the philosopher credit for sustaining a metaphor in the manner of Longinus and of his master Plato—but it will make sense: imperial slavery will have muzzled the free speech of man. Neither the syntactical nor metaphorical difficulties are insuperable. The cages, like muzzles, affect both the development of the body and the "development"—in its rhetorical sense—of the mind and its organ, the mouth. We have therefore retained the ms. reading.

44.8 **its own bloated parts:** there is a textual crux here: the phrase "its own parts" has modifying it the letters *καπανητα*, which is not a word: consequently most editors simply delete it (see Russell for emendations). We would suggest the word *καπανικός*, which Aristophanes uses (*Frogs* 492) to describe meals. Hesychius interpreted the word to mean "enormous"; we have translated it "bloated" to continue the luxurious extravagant lives that have died of dropsy swellings. Russell thinks that, if any emendation is accepted, there ought to be a parallel adjective for "immortal parts," but Longinus does not always aim for such Isocratean balance. The sting of the epithet lies partly in the absence of any balancing adjective, partly in the force of "develop." Because the immortal parts are not developed, there is no quality to be described; they have dwindled and withered away. "Develop," of course, picks up the philosopher's use of the word in the conceit of the pygmies (44.5), for once again Longinus is distinguishing between a difference of degree and a difference of kind.

Behind the notion of immortal parts lies the Platonic notion that the *logos* is divine; see Russell's note for citations.

Appendix B

# Metaphor in Longinus

The problem in dealing with metaphor in any author is to determine just how conscious was his use of language: how many metaphors are deliberate, how many are natural and inherent in the language itself. In a language like English, where metaphor is naturally pervasive,[1] the problem can sometimes be solved by a general knowledge of the author's habits; for example, one can scarcely attribute to Donne or Eliot too much consciousness, or too little to Thomson and Longfellow. Similarly in Greek, Homer has few metaphors, or at least few that are vividly functional,[2] while Aeschylus is studded with them.

The problem is complicated, however, by the fact that constant usage deadens etymologically original metaphors. These so-called "dead" or petrified metaphors make the job of the critic finally impossible; how can he know when he is evaluating a real intention or imposing a subtle ingenuity? Some writers, like Thoreau or Carlyle, when they wish to emphasize the etymological power of a word, put the significant root or prefix or suffix in italics. In *Walden* Thoreau writes:

> We now no longer camp as for a night, but have settled down on earth and forgotten heaven. We have adopted Christianity as an improved method of *agri*-culture.

But this device is not really so much a sign of increased sensitivity on the part of the writer as it is a testimony to the decaying impact of root-meanings and a confession by the writer of inability to convey those meanings in another way.[3]

In the case of a "dead" language like Greek, in which all metaphors are, so to speak, petrified, the problem is still further complicated. Usage and a

[1]In the 19th century, writers like Carlyle did much to popularize the theory that all language is essentially and inherently metaphorical.

[2]See W. Bedell Stanford, *Greek Metaphor* (Oxford, 1936), ch. 7 for a discussion of this: he argues that Homer does not use metaphor more than simile quantitatively and qualitatively.

[3]". . .whatever word or sentence is printed in a different character, shall be judged to contain something extra-ordinary either of wit or sublime." Jonathan Swift, *Tale of a Tub* (London, 1886), Preface, p. 39.

history of usage will tell us much about the vitality of any metaphor; but a usage not controlled by a knowledge of the language as a living medium tends to turn into purely etymological analysis. As we know so much more about the etymology of Latin and Greek than the ancients themselves knew, we may find our knowledge a hindrance, and espy metaphors where none was ever perceived. We cannot even take any satisfaction in the fact that Longinus, as a learned author, might be expected to possess the maximal linguistic knowledge of his age; he is an "academic" writer, and is prone to the glaring faults of the academic style, two of which are excessively timid and excessively bold use of metaphor. And coupled with this is the tendency of this style to use metaphoric words in a non-metaphorical way, as "glaring" is used in the previous sentence.

In the absence of markers, such as "as it were" or the like, in determining a Longinian use of metaphor, the first thing is to see whether the word is etymologically capable of metaphor; the second is to see whether its etymological impact is obvious, whether it lies on the surface of the word, as in "reduced to the bare bones," and is not buried in some Sanskrit or Hittite root; the third thing is to examine whether the surrounding language supports the notion of the metaphor; and fourth, to see whether parallels can be adduced from other authors, especially those who are favorites of Longinus, *e.g.*, Plato and Demosthenes.

It is not often that an author tells us of his use of metaphor, but in Chapter 32 Longinus does just that. Here he is speaking of multiple metaphors, their place and propriety. Caecilius and other critical rule-setters allow only two or three in a given passage. Longinus, however, opposes to this Demosthenes as the true limit; and he then lays down his two guiding principles concerning multiple metaphors (or what we call "mixed metaphors"), while at the same time, he develops an extended water-metaphor of his own, into which he does not hesitate to mix metaphors from medicine and astronomy and finance. Rules about two or three metaphors being the limit are foolish when applied to a genius like Demosthenes, especially when he is vehemently involved in his theme. There are at least five metaphors in the quotation from Demosthenes, in what is no more than a fragment of a sentence.[4]

Longinus' images range all over the world and all over nature and society: he seems to have no special area of preference. There are metaphors of lightning (1.4, 12.4, 34.4); ships (2.2 and 3.5); spurs and bits (2.2, 34.2); fountains (one would certainly think this a stereotyped or petrified metaphor, but Longinus says "as someone would say [ὡς ἄν εἴποι τις]); sea and water (9.13 and 32.1); walls (10.7 and 41.3); irrigation (13.3); gladiators (13.4

[4]These are: ἠκρωτηριασμένοι, προπεπωκότες, μετροῦντες, ὅροι, κανόνες.

and 34.1,2); theatres and courts (14.2); untimely birth (14.3); medicine (16.2 and 32.2-4, 38.5); tax and business (20.1 and 32.4); painting (13.4 and 17.2); storms (20.3); catapults (22.2); music (28.1,2; 39.3; 40.1); voting (33.4); pygmies (44.4); war (44.6); prison (44.10). The Nile, the Ocean, Mt. Aetna, and tides are key symbolic values for him.

If any one type of metaphor does seem to dominate, it is images of light and fire,[5] with water images a close second. Whenever Longinus wishes to express the height and *vivida vis* of sublimity (ὕψος), he seems to turn to these two phenomena most easily and naturally; and fire and water control the description of his two favorite authors, Demosthenes and Homer.[6] Perhaps the reason for this lies in the fact that these are two of the four elements, and if sublimity and emotion are the essential elements of great writing, it is both natural and appropriate to put them, as it were, "in their elements" when comparison is necessary. Fire is a symbol of upward motion, and striving upward is a sign of sublimity and of the Platonism in which Longinus' soul is steeped. Water is both violent and quiescent: it can describe Demosthenes' emotions sweeping all before them or Homer's sweet senescence, lapping lightly at the limits of its former tidal greatness. When Longinus comes to develop his theory of the connection between man's nature and the nature of the sublime (ch. 35), his two examples, his two symbols, are Mt. Aetna and the Ocean: fire and water in their vastness and most extreme moments.[7]

The next most important group of metaphors are those taken from the idea of a struggle (ἀγών): the prize of victory (13.4,5; 34.1; 44.3). For the very idea implied in the establishing of contests and prizes is that of imitation. Just as Plato supplies the philosophic significance of fire, Aristotle supplies the significance of contest. The prospective author, of course, is not to compete with his contemporaries (for this involves not the ages but a

[5]A. O. Prickard, in the Introduction to his translation of Longinus (Oxford, 1906), p. xv, stresses the imagery drawn from walls and the craft of the mason, though he cites only two examples (10.7 and 41.3); he feels that this indicates a new sensitivity on the part of Longinus.

[6]It is probably no accident that Pindar in his last Olympian chooses fire and water as his two symbols of excelling greatness, or that Mt. Aetna figures in one of his greatest descriptions (Pythian I); Pindar is Platonic in many ways. What is curious is that Longinus never quotes Pindar, at least in the text we possess; one would think him the most eminent choice possible for quotations exemplifying the sublime. (He does mention him twice in 33.5, but only glancingly.)

[7]Longinus does virtually nothing with star-imagery, except in a passage in ch. 32; but this seems natural enough. Stars are symbolic of detached, ceaseless, unvarying order, the exact opposite of sublimity and emotion. Comets would have been of great use to him, and his failure to mention them suggests either a lack of experience or a lack of parallels in Caecilius. Longinus seems content with lightning.

generation); instead he is to compete with antiquity for the prize of posterity. The truest greatness of the Olympic victors lies, as Pindar knew, in their emulating their heroic ancestors in a different kind of arena. Their greatness, however, is somehow always less than that of their ancestors, as Pindar recognizes both in the ornamental crown conferred by his hymns and in the need for sealing the victory with an identifying echo of myth. Writers, on the other hand, compete with real ancestors in the same arena, and can achieve exactly the same prize, the same fame for the ages. And their contest, their strife, is good, as Longinus quotes from Hesiod in 13.5. Plato, for example, had entered the lists with Homer and, though he lost, he gained. What was true for him, Longinus implies, will be true for any writer who takes as his models the great artists of the past.

These metaphors, then, fire and contest, are connected, since both suggest aspiration to rise. And rising in turn suggests sublimity ( ὕψος), the author's goal and test.

Appendix C

# Could Philo Have Been One of the Philosophers?

Philo has many words, phrases, and images in common with the philosopher:

1. Philo uses the image at least four times of "swaddling-clothes" to describe education (*i.e.*, from the cradle): critics cite only *On Drunkenness* 198, where the context is not political but cultural. In 49-51 of the same work Philo censures those who, failing to go through the right course of study, start with philosophy rather than grammar and geometry "right from their swaddling-clothes, so to speak." Twice elsewhere (*Embassy to Gaius* 115 and 170) he uses it of being trained in Jewish teaching "from swaddling-clothes." In addition to the image of "swaddling-clothes," in the passage cited by the critics (*On Drunkenness* 198) we find also the idea of "learn from childhood" and the image of the "battered" spirit, all of which appear conjoined in the philosopher (44.3). So too, both Philo and the philosopher begin by saying "I do not wonder" and "I wonder."

2. In the essay *Every Good Man is Free* (17), Philo argues that political freedom is not a fit subject for an inquiry, only the topic of the "slavery of the soul to emotion." The philosopher in Longinus is said to *inquire* and to suspect the theory of political freedom as an explanation of great rhetoric.

3. Philo (*Every Good Man is Free* 48) speaks of the fact that slaves have no freedom of speech, and he quotes in support the same line used later by Marcus Aurelius (11.80): "You were born a slave, and you have no part in free speech." The philosopher makes the same point, quoting Homer.

4. The images of slaves, bonds, and bondage are frequent in Philo (*On Drunkenness* 101; *Every Good Man is Free* 18); the image and the word appear in the philosopher's speech (44.5). We should consider also that other parts of Philo correspond to Longinus's rebuttal of the philosopher and to other parts of *On the Sublime.*

5. In fragment 2.8 of *On Providence,* Philo speaks of "souls without ballast"; Longinus uses the same image, and word, in 2.2.

6. Philo, in *Every Good Man is Free* (24), says that he who has a "low sensibility, one appropriate to a slave," is being really a slave; Longinus (9.3) speaks of the man whose "sensibility is appropriate to a slave" and of "low sensibility."

7. Philo, though a confirmed Jew and a commentator on books of the

Bible, speaks of Moses as "the law-giver of the Jews" (see *Every Good Man is Free* 29.43); Longinus uses a comparable phrase in 9.9.

8. Philo, in *The Eternity of the World,* rejects the Stoic notion of decay, destruction, and rebirth (47 ff.)—a doctrine which would be anathema to Longinus—and denies that the world has become "old and sterile" (61), asserting that it "over and over again remains the same, being always young." Longinus' aesthetic theory would not allow him to admit a decay in nature's powers; if Longinus was a Hellenized Jew, the philosophic, and theological, source of his view could well be Philo or Philo's own source, the Bible.

9. In *The Unchangeableness of God,* Philo speaks of the Hebrew soul as "having the custom of conversing with sublime powers, sensing as below itself everything that has to do with the body, since such things are low and earthly." In 7.1, Longinus emphasizes that greatness of soul "senses as below itself" such worldly things as honor, riches, etc.

10. Philo, in *On Drunkenness* (8), follows Plato, as does Longinus, by arguing that virtues and vices arise from the same source (see Longinus 5.1). So, too, Philo's image for this—"shoots springing up from one root"—derives from Plato, as does Longinus' argument in ch. 44, describing how vices hatch in our souls (see ch. 44, n. on **according to the wise**).

11. Philo has an extended image for "the huge army of the world's desires" (*On Drunkenness* 75), and refers to esteem, empire, beauty, strength, and other graspings; so too Longinus in 44.6 ff.

12. Philo, in the essay *Every Good Man is Free* (18), says that he is concerned with those who are not yoked to craving, fright, pleasure, and pain, that is, with those who have thrown off their chains, "just as those who have escaped from confinement"; the image turns up in Longinus in 44.10.

13. Philo, in several places, is fond of the image of the sea ebbing back into itself (*On the Eternity of the World* 142; *The Unchangeableness of God* 177). The same image appears in Longinus' famous description of the aged Homer (9.13).

Since Philo visited Rome about 40 A.D., and since it seems probable that Longinus was employed in a Roman household as a kind of tutor, some have assumed that they met and conversed. Without admitting or denying the possibility, it is possible to see, on the basis of the foregoing parallels, an influence. Philo changed from an early Stoic period (*Every Good Man is Free*) to a more orthodox—even if highly allegorical—Hebraism; if, as we, and others, suspect, Longinus was a Hellenized Jew, he would probably have read Philo. Out of that writer's manifold writings, it would be easy for Longinus to have extracted, whether deliberately or by the "hooks and eyes"

of memory the various uses to which he put Philo's not always consistent positions.

As for the notion that Philo wrote *On the Sublime,* it may be disregarded. For example, Philo is extremely fond of Hebraic metaphors—*e.g.,* "the city of the body" (*On Drunkenness* 101), a form of image which does not turn up in Longinus. In addition to such minor details we may point to the general cast of Philo's style, which is closer, in its discursiveness, to Plutarch than to Longinus, and to Philo's general contempt for rhetoric.

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